viz Signature

THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM

KAZUO UMEZU

vol. 11

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1936, Kazuo Umezu is Japan's most respected and influential horror manga artist. Umezu began his artistic career at the age of 18, creating stories for both *shôjo* (girls) and *shonen* (boys) manga magazines, and working in an amazingly diverse range of genres. In Japan he is most famous for the gag manga *Makoto-chan* (1971), but his most ambitious works are horror and science fiction, including *The Drifting Classroom* (1972-1974), *My Name is Shingo* (1982-1986), *The Left Hand of God, the Right Hand of the Devil* (1986-1989) and *Fourteen* (1990-1995). His works have been adapted into anime and live-action films.

THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM
Vol. 11

STORY AND ART BY KAZUO UMEZU

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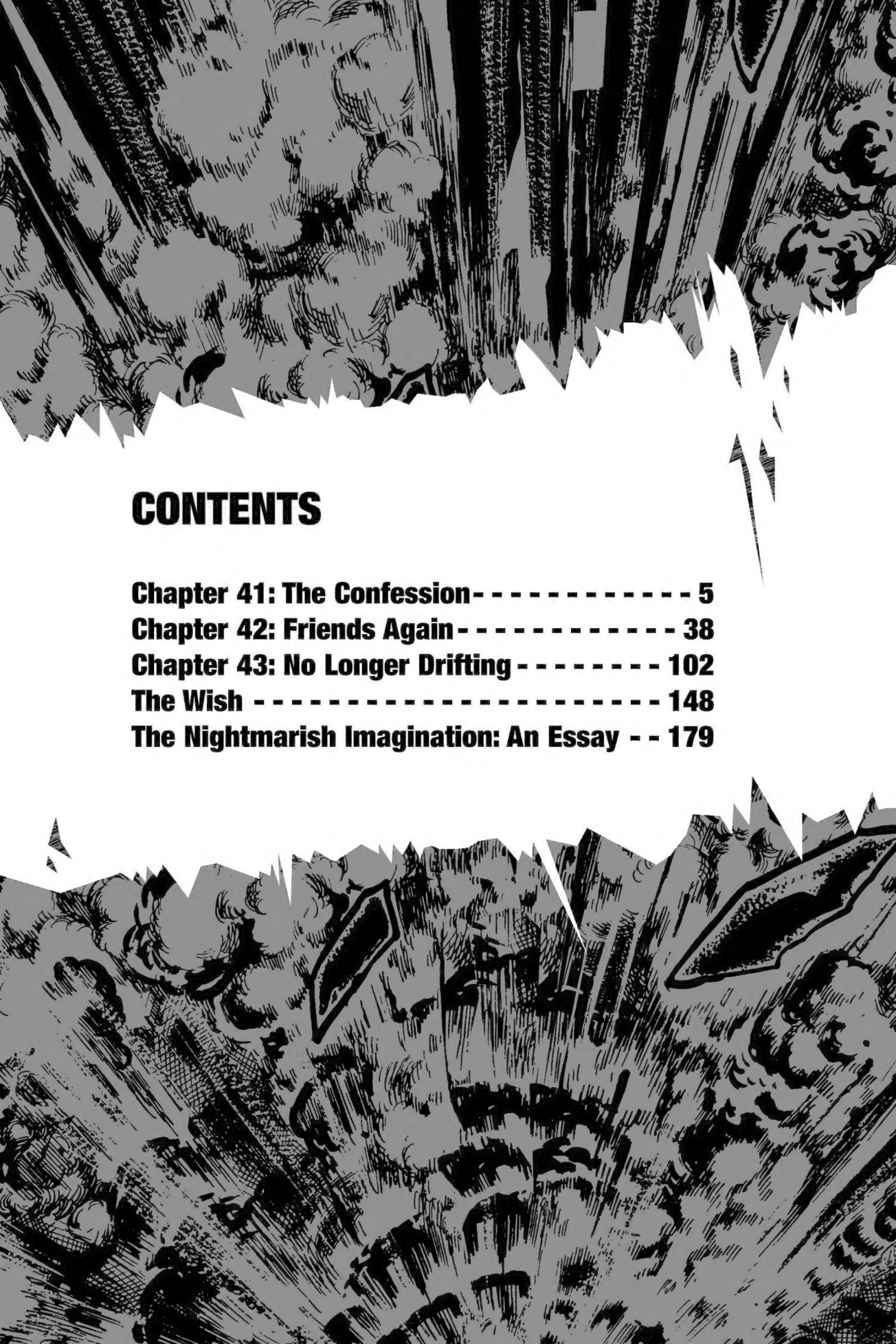
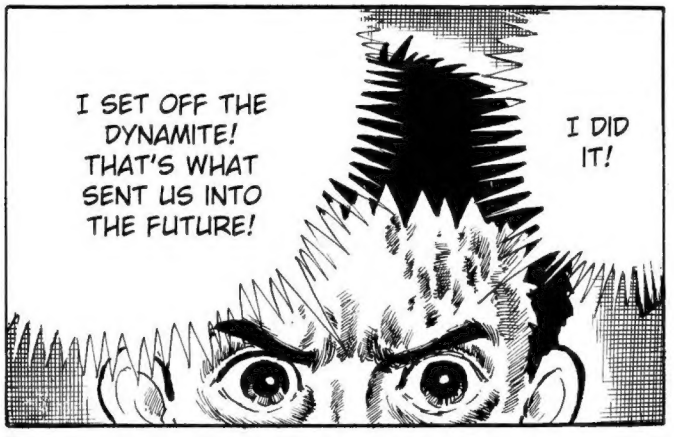


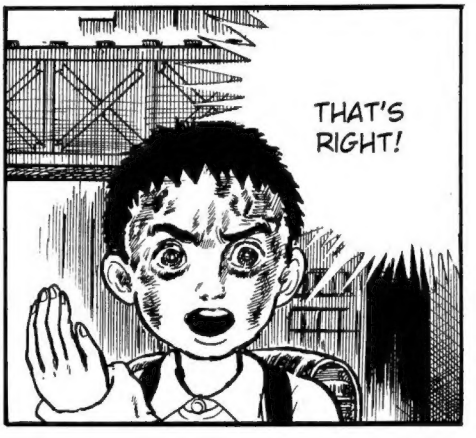
CONTENTS

Chapter 41: The Confession - - - - - - - - - - - - - 5
Chapter 42: Friends Again - - - - - - - - - - - - - 38
Chapter 43: No Longer Drifting - - - - - - - - 102
The Wish - 148
The Nightmarish Imagination: An Essay - - 179

ビル
S-SO YOU REALLY DID DO IT...!
CHAPTER 41:
THE CONFESSION

THIS WHOLE THING WAS YOUR FAULT...?!

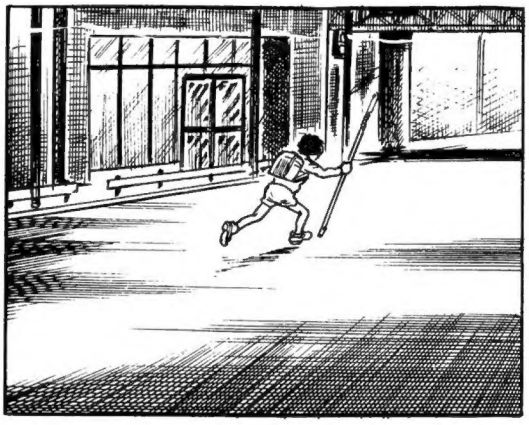

I SET OFF THE DYNAMITE! THAT'S WHAT SENT US INTO THE FUTURE!
I DID IT!


THAT'S RIGHT!

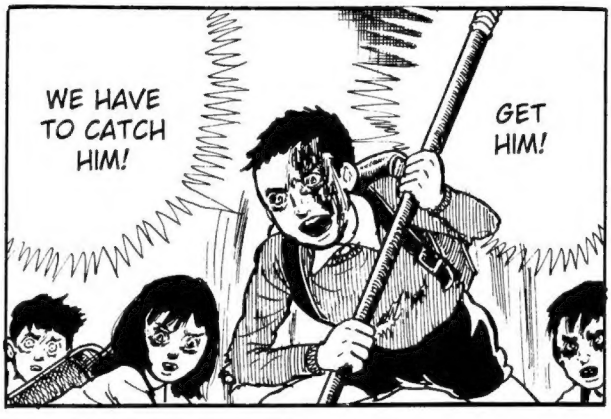
WELL, WHATEVER! I DON'T CARE ANYMORE! I'M GOING BACK TO OUR WORLD BY MYSELF!

M-MAKE UP FOR IT...?!

THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR IT!



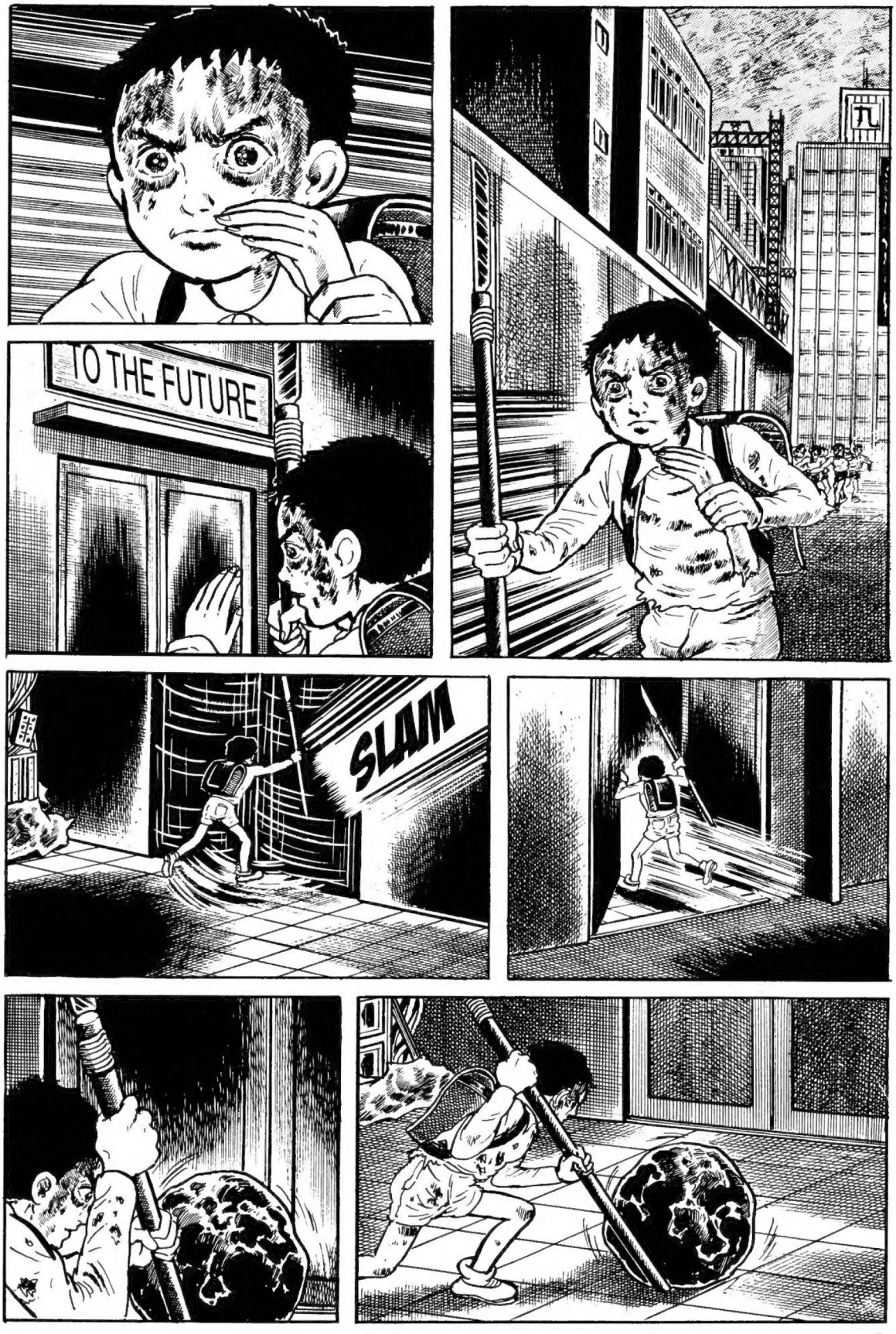
WH-WHAT?!

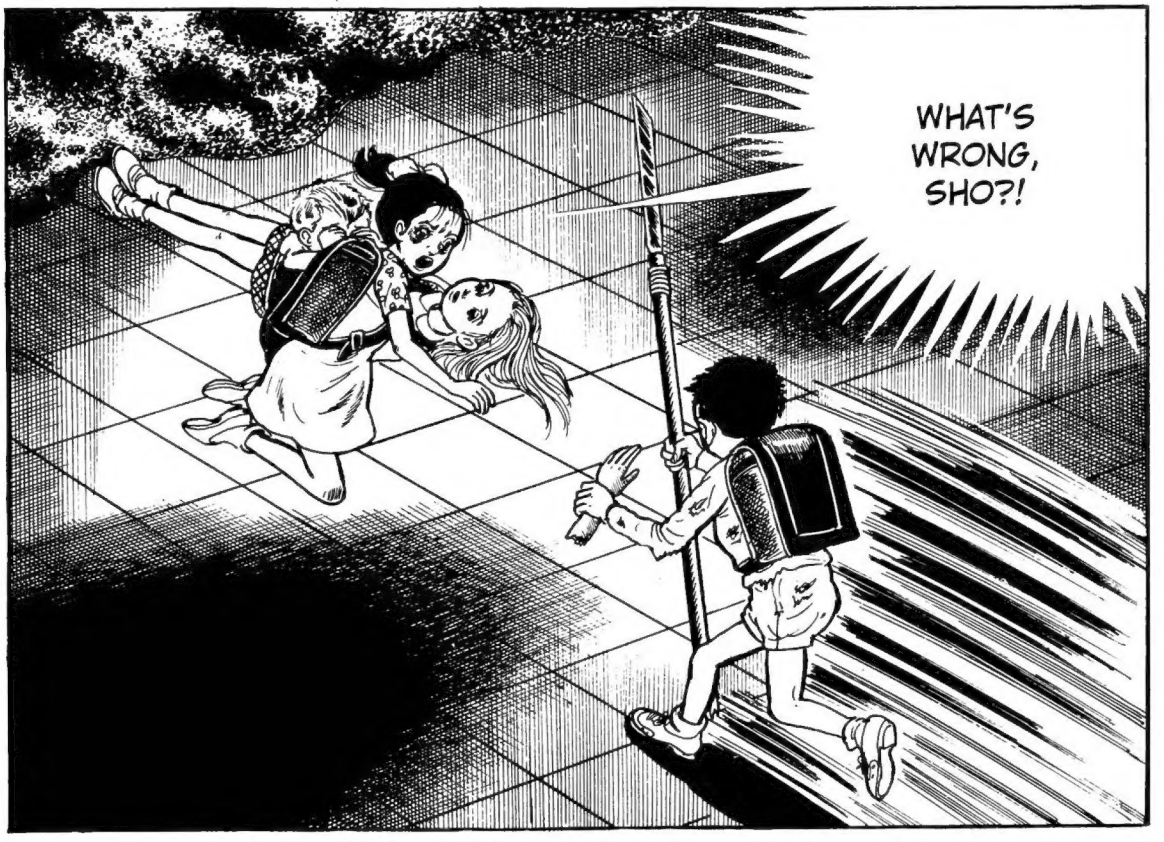

WE HAVE TO CATCH HIM!
GET HIM!

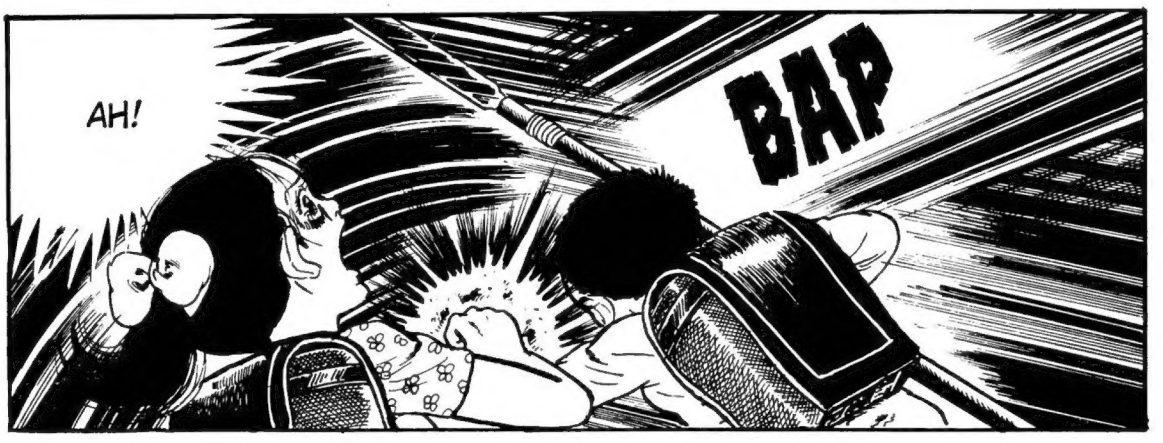
ビル
HE'S RUNNING AWAY!

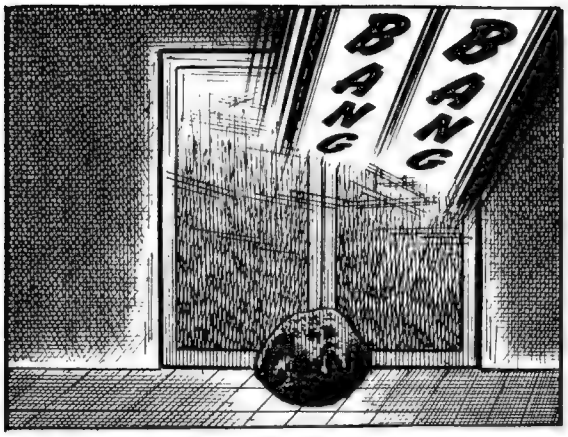
WE'LL KILL THAT BASTARD AND TEAR HIM TO SHREDS!

THEN WE'LL ROAST HIM!
WE'LL HAVE A FEAST!


TO THE FUTURE
SLAM

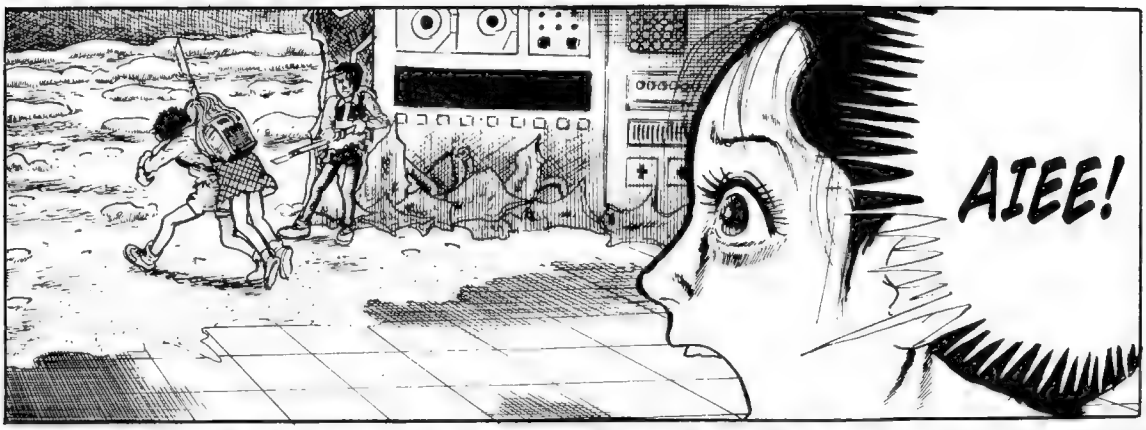

WHAT'S WRONG, SHO?!

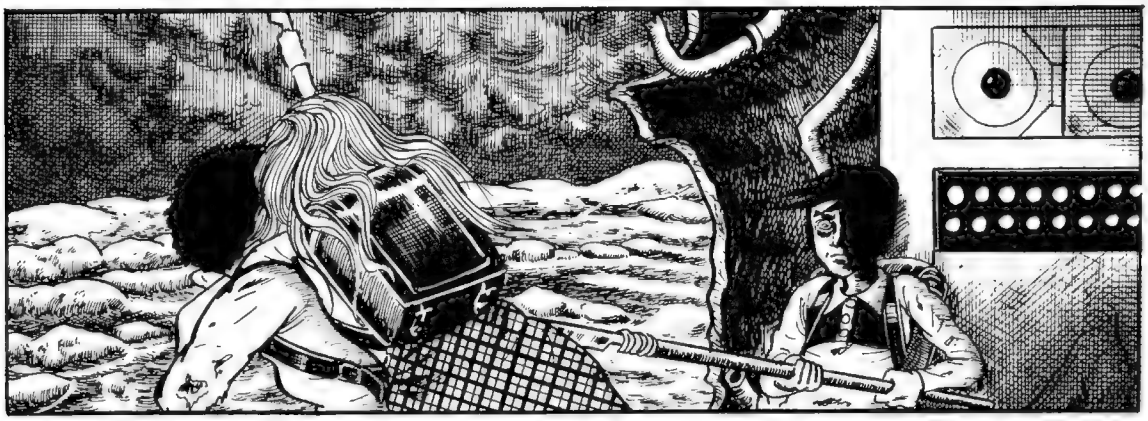

AH!
BAP

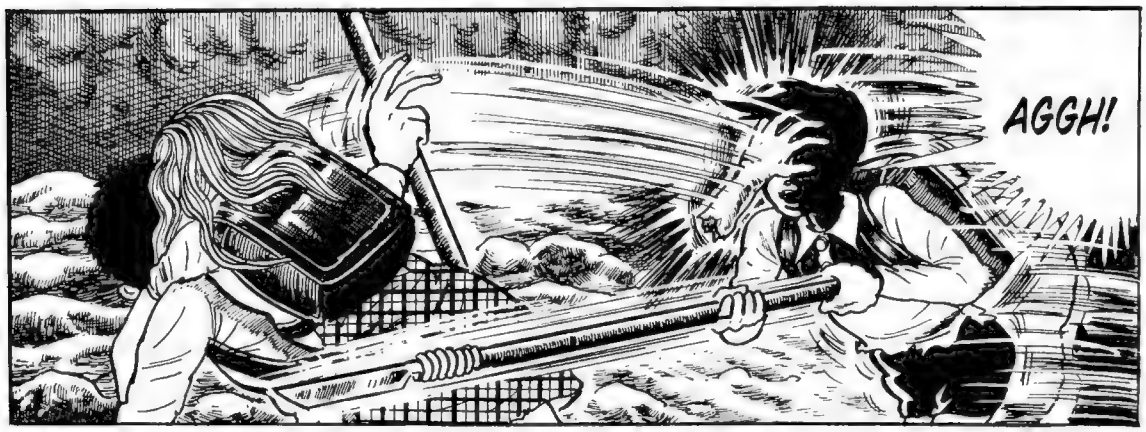

BANG
BANG

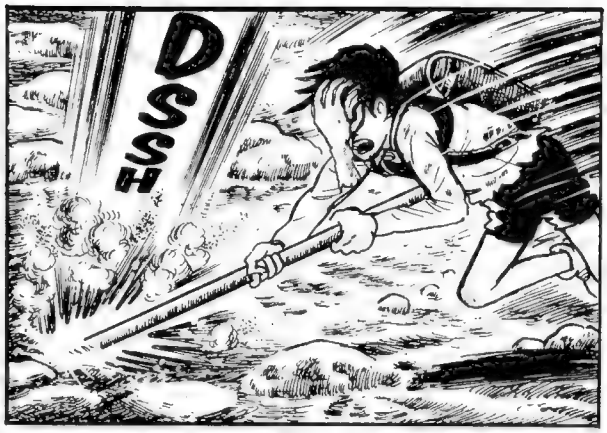
BANG
BANG
OPEN THE DOOR, TAKAMATSU!

SHO!


AIEE!



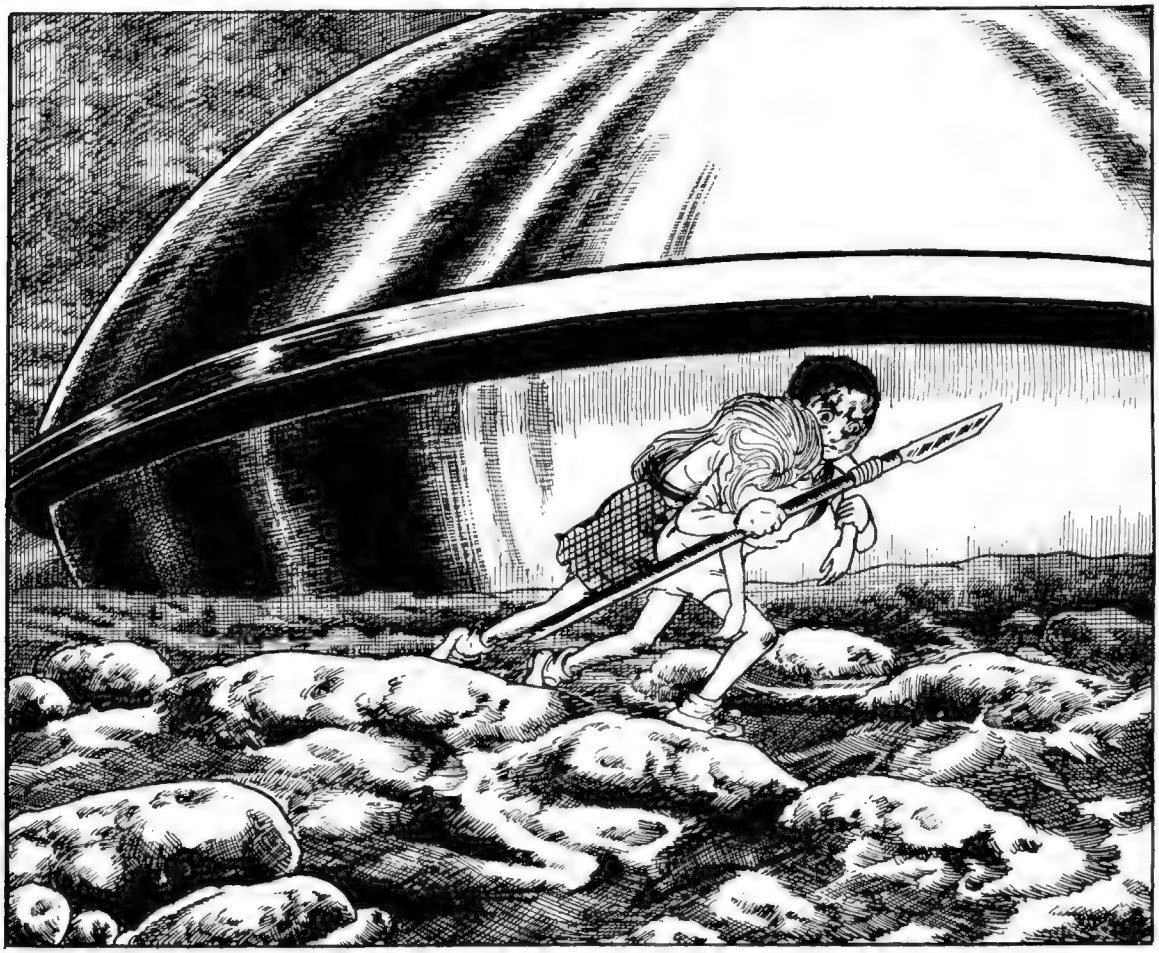

AGGH!


DSSH

EYAAAH!
KRKK
BANG
BANG

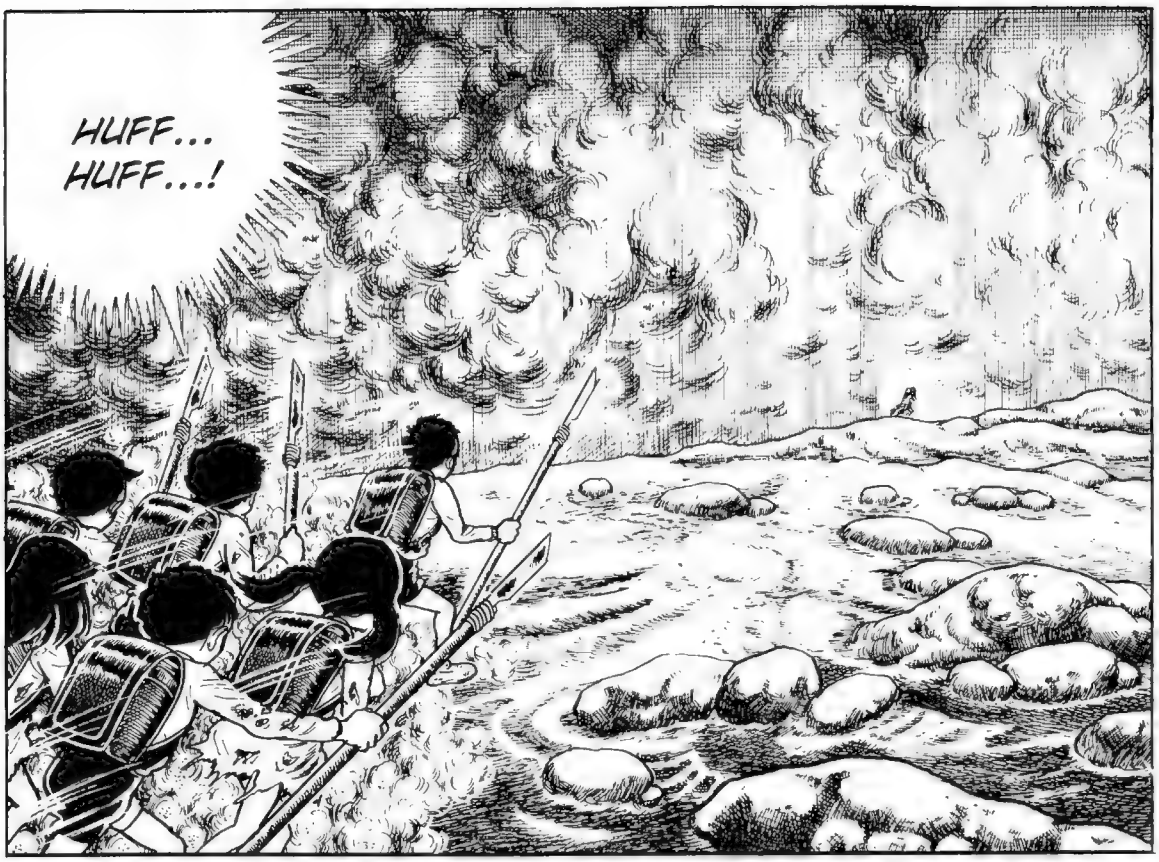
RAAAGGH!

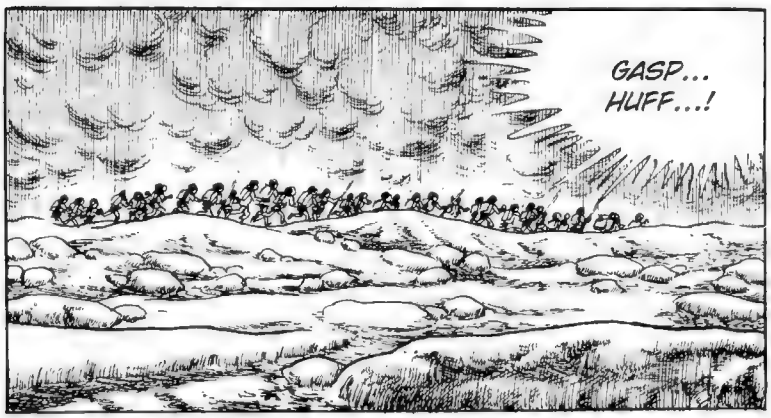
AIEEEE!
SKRRR



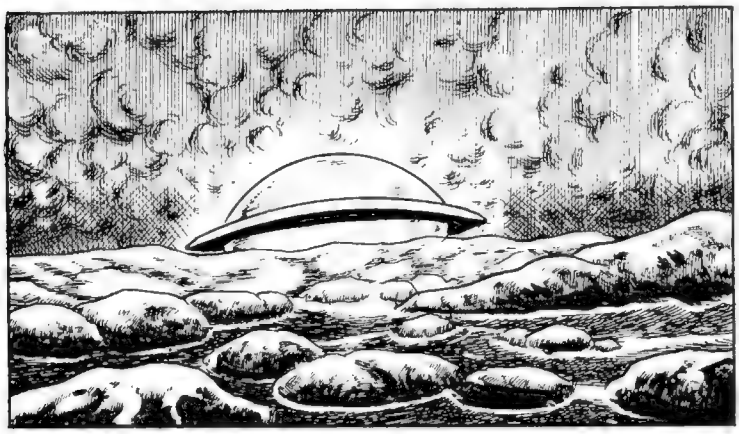
THERE HE IS!

DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

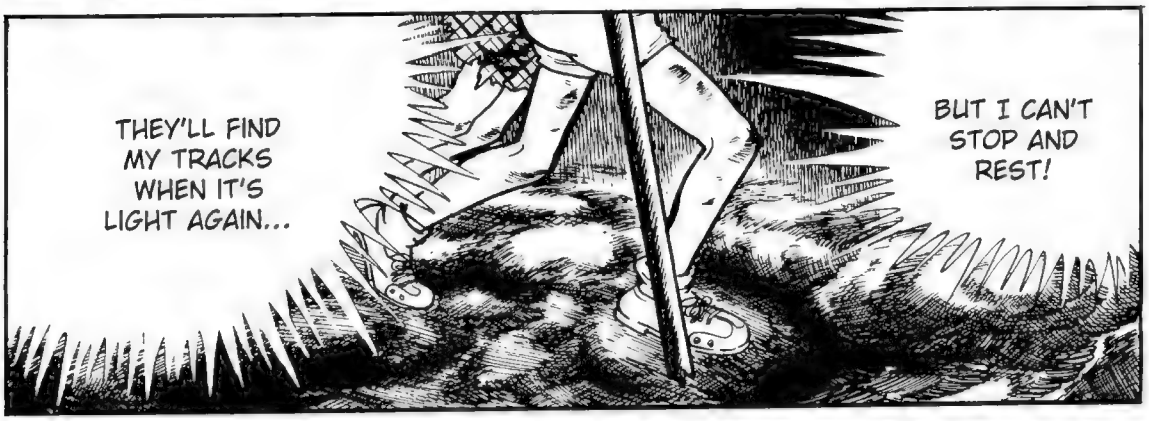

HUFF...
HUFF...!


GASP...
HUFF...!

HUFF...
HUFF...!



THANK GOD, IT'S NIGHTTIME!


THEY'LL FIND MY TRACKS WHEN IT'S LIGHT AGAIN...
BUT I CAN'T STOP AND REST!

BUT I CAN'T GO ON...

NNNHH...

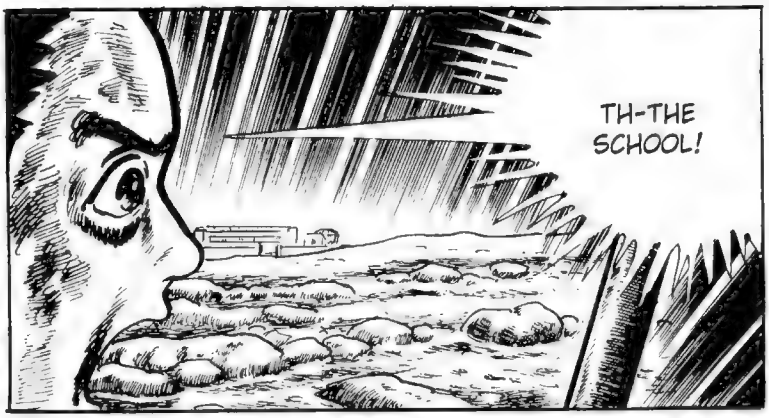
WHUD

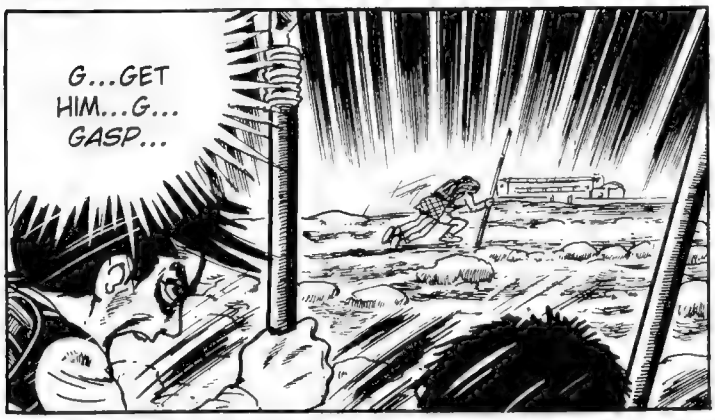
IT'S MORNING!
I SHOULD BE PRETTY CLOSE TO THE CHASM! I'LL CUT TO THE NORTH...
THE SMOG'S GONE TOO!
THERE'S THE END OF THE CHASM!
GASP!

OVER THERE!
I WON'T LET THEM CATCH ME!
...NO MATTER WHAT!
I HAVE TO KEEP GOING...
NOT HERE!
HUFF... HUFF...
GASP... WHEEZE...
HUFF... HUFF...

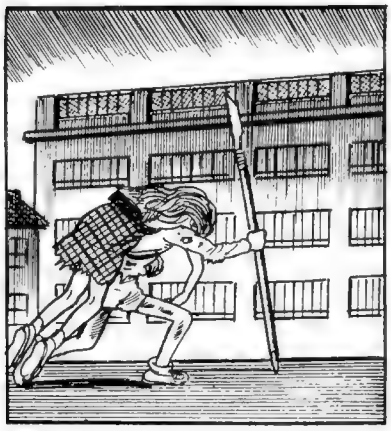
GASP...
GASP!

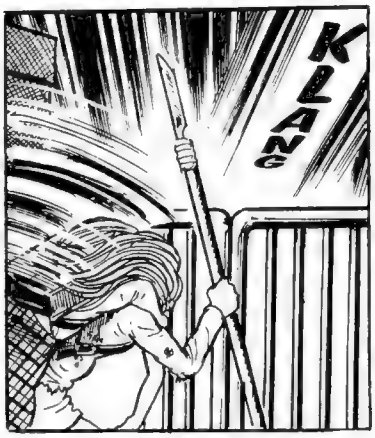
UWAAH!


TH-THE
SCHOOL!


G...GET
HIM...G...
GASP...

UWAAAH!




KLANG

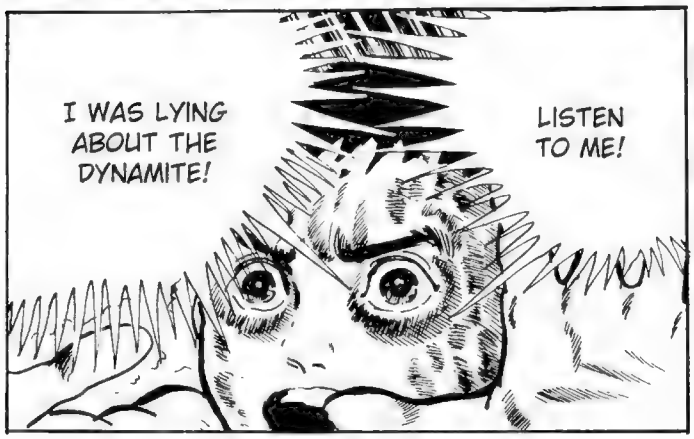
YAH!

THUD

I DID IT!

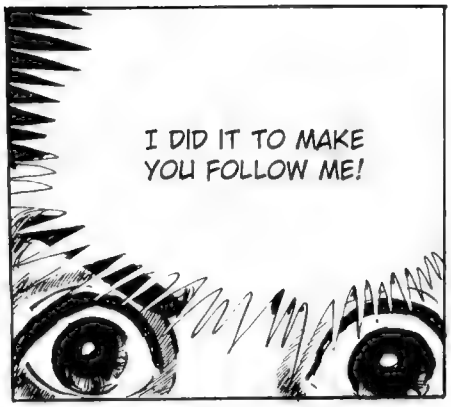
WHEEZE... WHEEZE...

HUFF... HUFF...
WAIT!


I WAS LYING ABOUT THE DYNAMITE!
LISTEN TO ME!

HOLD ON, EVERYONE!

YOU LIAR!
SH-SHUT UP!

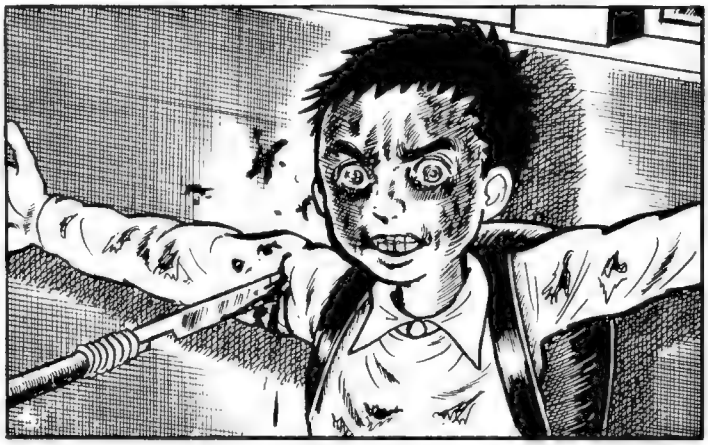

I DID IT TO MAKE YOU FOLLOW ME!

DIE--!!!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

RRAGGHH !!

THOKK
KLNK

AH!



I'M TOO DIZZY!
GASP... GASP...
C-COME ON, EVERYONE!
DON'T BE AFRAID!
C-COME ON! AGAIN! J-JUST STAB HIM!
JUST HEAR ME OUT!
LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU!

LISTEN! DON'T YOU WANT TO GO BACK HOME?
DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO HIM!
AND IT WORKED!
I WANTED TO LEAD YOU ALL BACK HERE!
DON'T YOU SEE? I DIDN'T SET OFF THE DYNAMITE!
SOMEONE SHUT HIM UP! LET'S FINISH HIM OFF!
SHUT UP, YOU GODDAMN COWARD!

JUST LISTEN FOR A SECOND!
THE COMPUTER TOLD US THE SCHOOL IS THE CLOSEST POINT OF CONTACT TO OUR WORLD!
W-WAIT! WE HAVE TO HURRY, OR WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO OUR TIME!
JUST LISTEN!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!
SOME KIND OF SHOCK OCCURRED BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND THE ONE WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW!
THIS IS WHAT I'M THINKING!
IT'LL CLOSE UP IF WE WAIT ANY LONGER!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, BUT IT RIPPED THROUGH THE WALL OF TIME. WE SLIPPED THROUGH THE HOLE IN TIME!

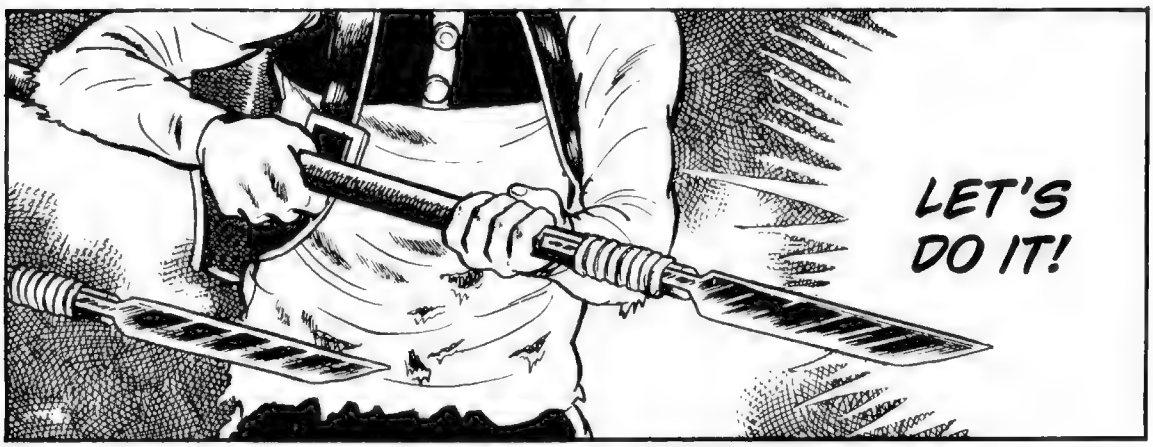
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO CREATE ANOTHER SHOCK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN STRETCH THE TEAR OUT TOWARDS US!
THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE! IF WE WAIT TOO LONG WE'LL END UP TRAPPED HERE!
WE HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER EXPLOSION!
I WISH I HAD SET IT OFF, THEN I'D KNOW HOW...!
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE DYNAMITE!
SLISSH
SH-SHUT UP!

AND HIS PLAN'S BULLSHIT!
DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU! HE'S GUILTY!
WE CAN DO IT THROUGH NISHI!
I CAN REACH MY MOTHER THROUGH HER! AND MY MOTHER CAN REACH ME!
NISHI HAS A STRANGE POWER!

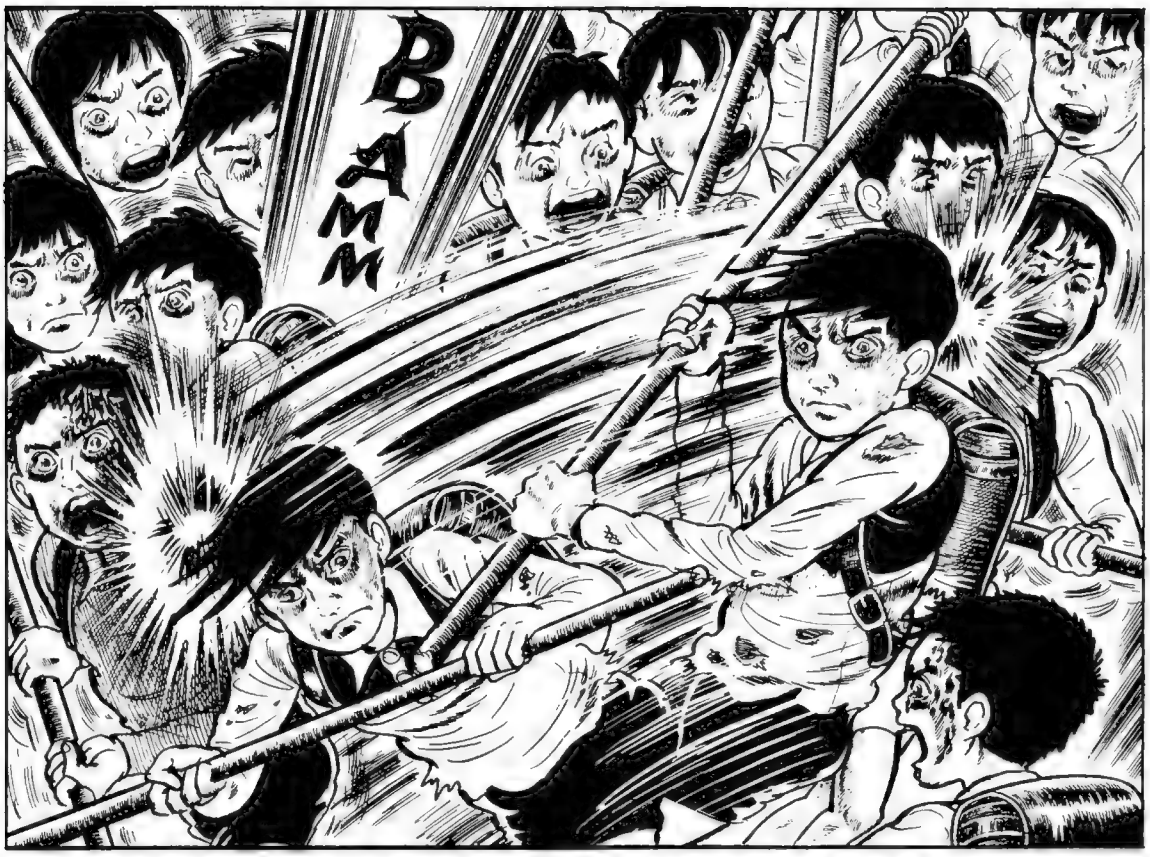
IF SHE CAN CARRY VOICES, MAYBE SHE CAN TRANSPORT OBJECTS TOO!
WHAT?!
NOW WE HAVE TO FOCUS AND WILL OURSELVES TO GO HOME! WE HAVE TO DO IT TOGETHER!
IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF PSYCHIC POWER! NISHI ALWAYS DREAMED OF ANOTHER WORLD!

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND IF YOU THINK THERE'S A WAY OUT OF THIS! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR EXCUSES!
SHUT UP! SHUT UP, SHUT UP!

THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL LET YOU LIVE! LET'S GO!


LET'S DO IT!

URAAH
RAHH
BAM
NOO
!!!


BAMM

AGH!

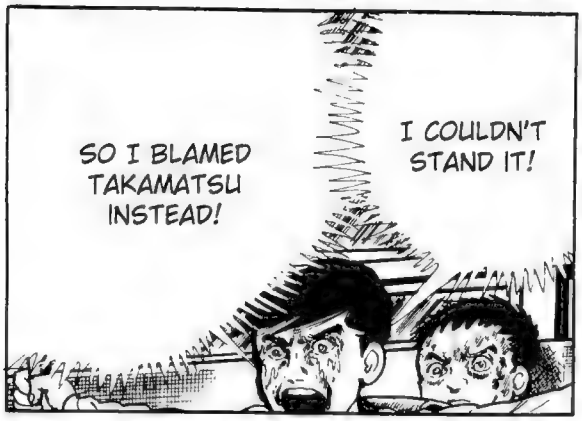
S-STOP IT!

I'M THE ONE WHO DID IT!
STOP IT!

OTOMO ...?!

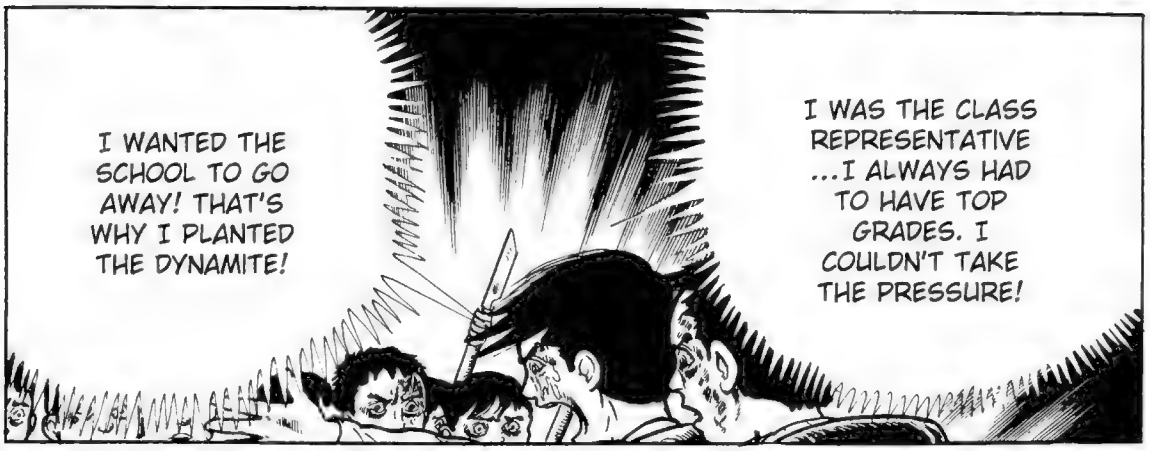
FORGIVE ME! I DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE!
I'M THE ONE WHO SET OFF THE DYNAMITE!

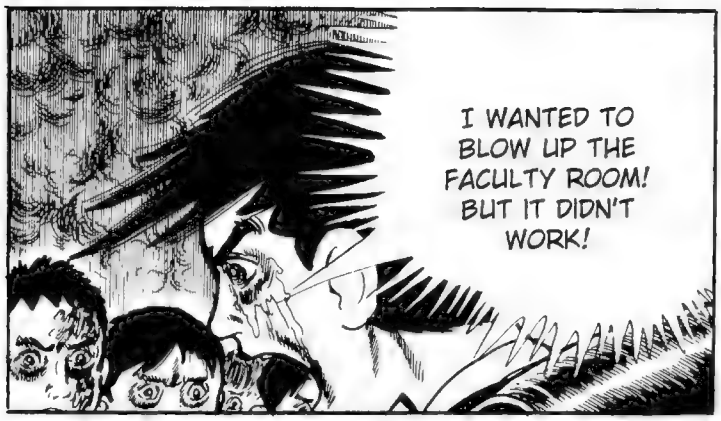
YOU SHOULD KILL ME, NOT TAKAMATSU!


SO I BLAMED TAKAMATSU INSTEAD!
I COULDN'T STAND IT!

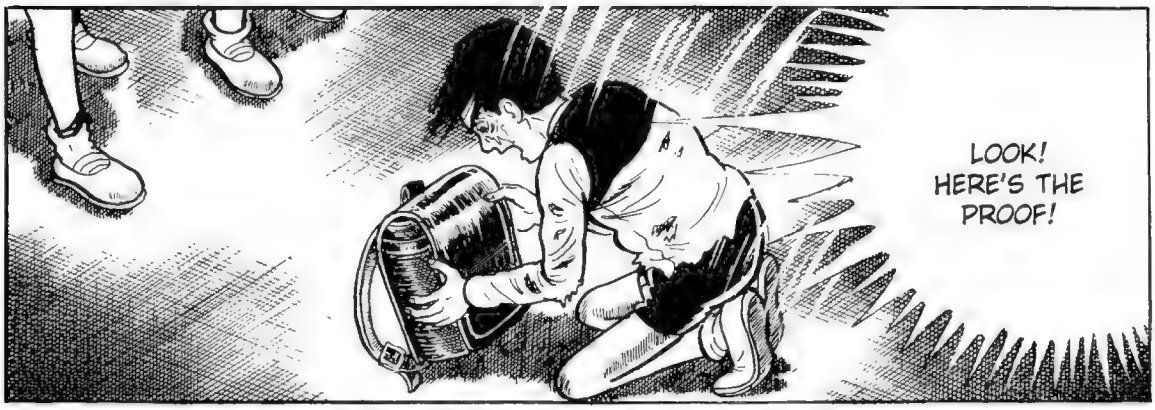
MY GUILT WAS UNBEARABLE!

I FELT AWFUL! AND THE WORSE I FELT, THE WORSE I TREATED TAKAMATSU!

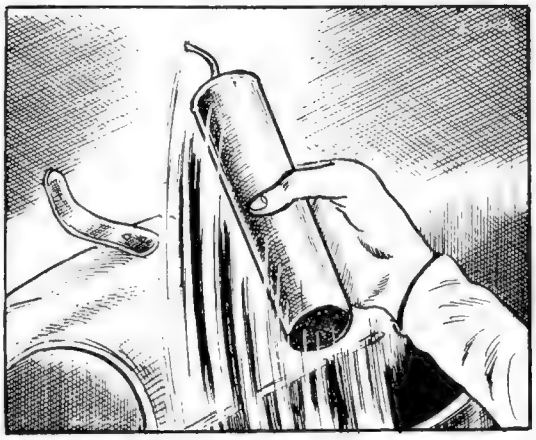

I WANTED THE SCHOOL TO GO AWAY! THAT'S WHY I PLANTED THE DYNAMITE!
I WAS THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE ...I ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE TOP GRADES. I COULDN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE!


I WANTED TO BLOW UP THE FACULTY ROOM! BUT IT DIDN'T WORK!

SO I DECIDED THAT NEXT TIME I'D SET OFF AN EVEN BIGGER EXPLOSION!

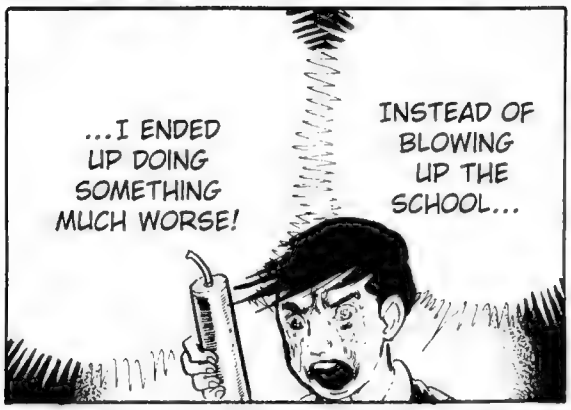

LOOK! HERE'S THE PROOF!

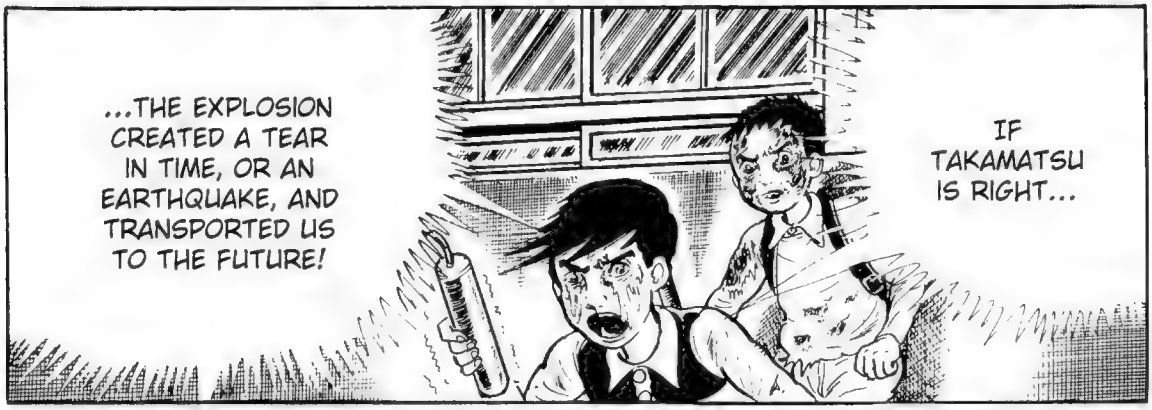
AH!



GASP...!

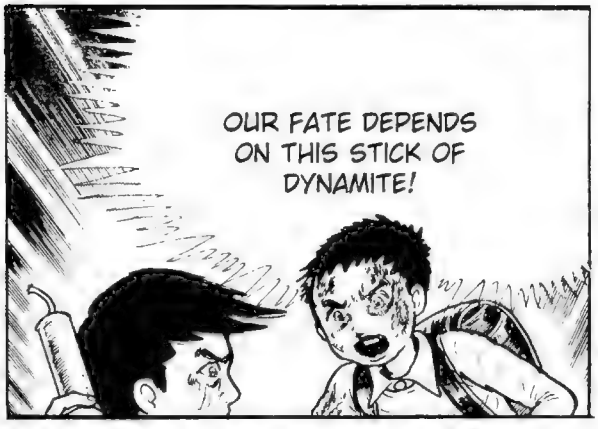
DYNAMITE!


...I ENDED UP DOING SOMETHING MUCH WORSE!
INSTEAD OF BLOWING UP THE SCHOOL...


...THE EXPLOSION CREATED A TEAR IN TIME, OR AN EARTHQUAKE, AND TRANSPORTED US TO THE FUTURE!
IF TAKAMATSU IS RIGHT...

CAN YOU SET OFF THIS DYNAMITE AGAIN...?

OTOMO!


OUR FATE DEPENDS ON THIS STICK OF DYNAMITE!

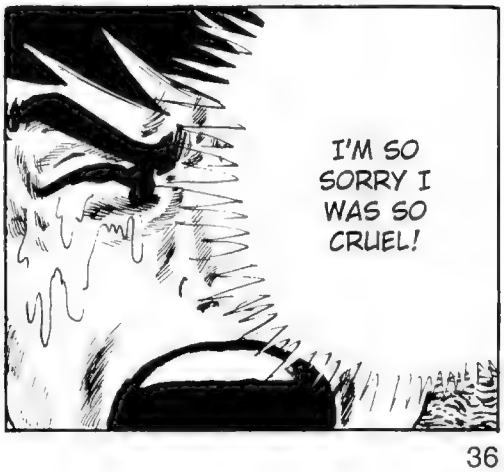
Y-YES! I CAN DO IT!

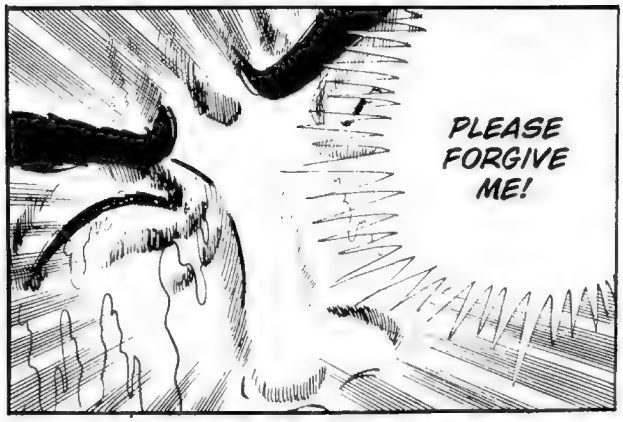
TAKA-MATSU!

THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE!

P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

THIS TIME WE'LL ALL WORK TOGETHER!


I'M SO SORRY I WAS SO CRUEL!

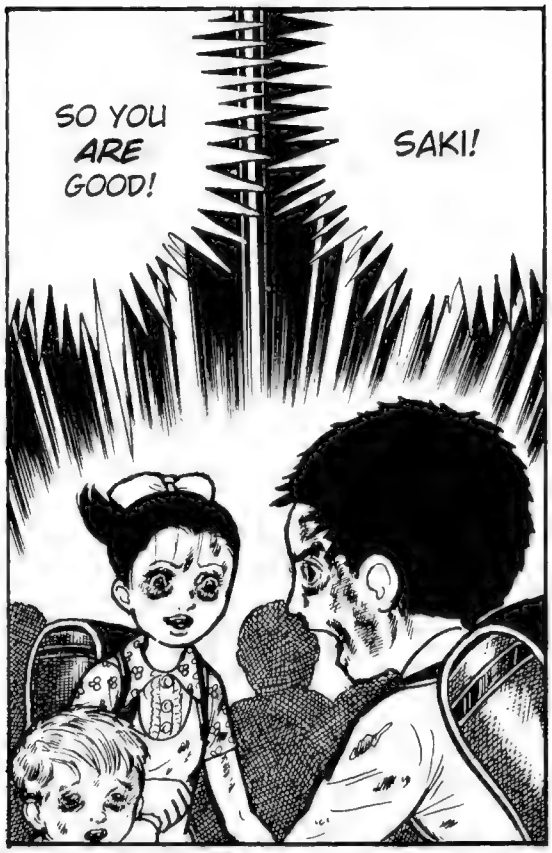

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

OTOMO!

THAK

CHAPTER 42: FRIENDS AGAIN

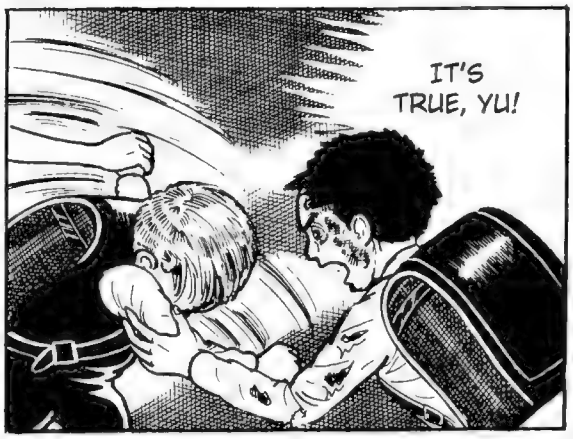
I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO THINK YOU WERE WITH ME. I KNEW YOU'D BRING YU BACK HERE.

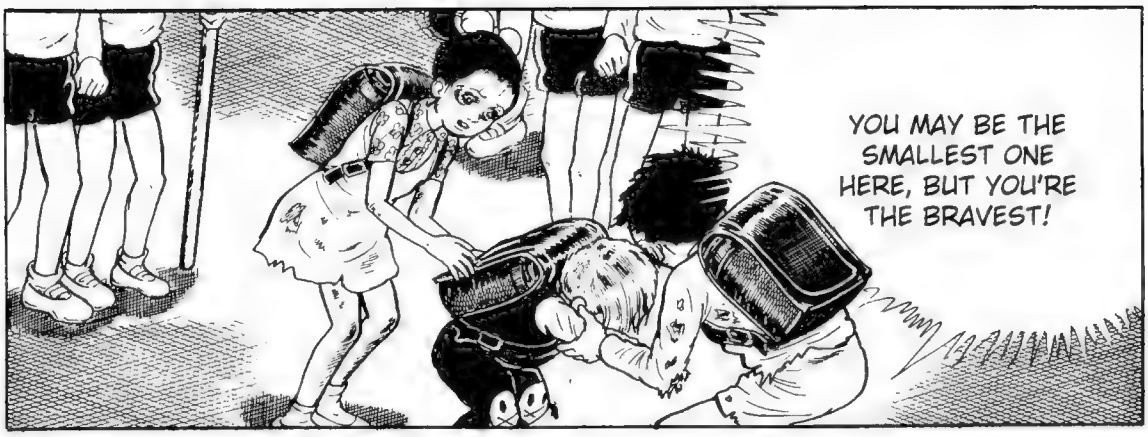

SO YOU ARE GOOD!
SAKI!

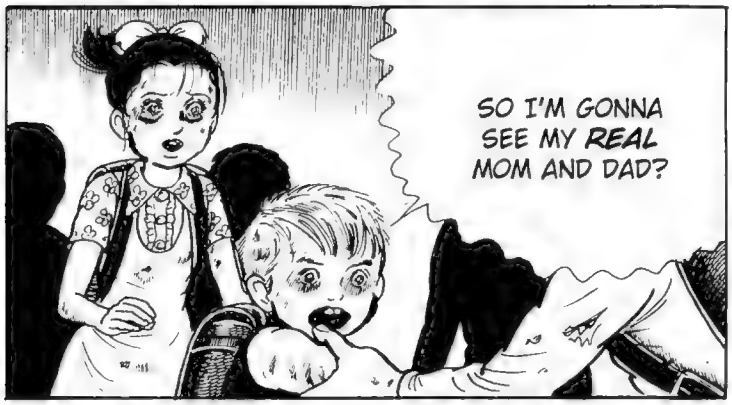
I ALWAYS BELIEVED IN YOU.

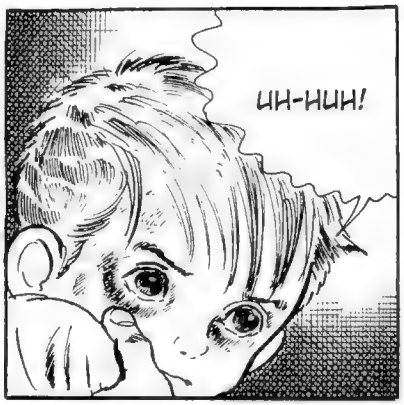
...W-WE CAN GO BACK HOME?
I-IS IT TRUE...

IT'S TRUE!


IT'S TRUE, YU!

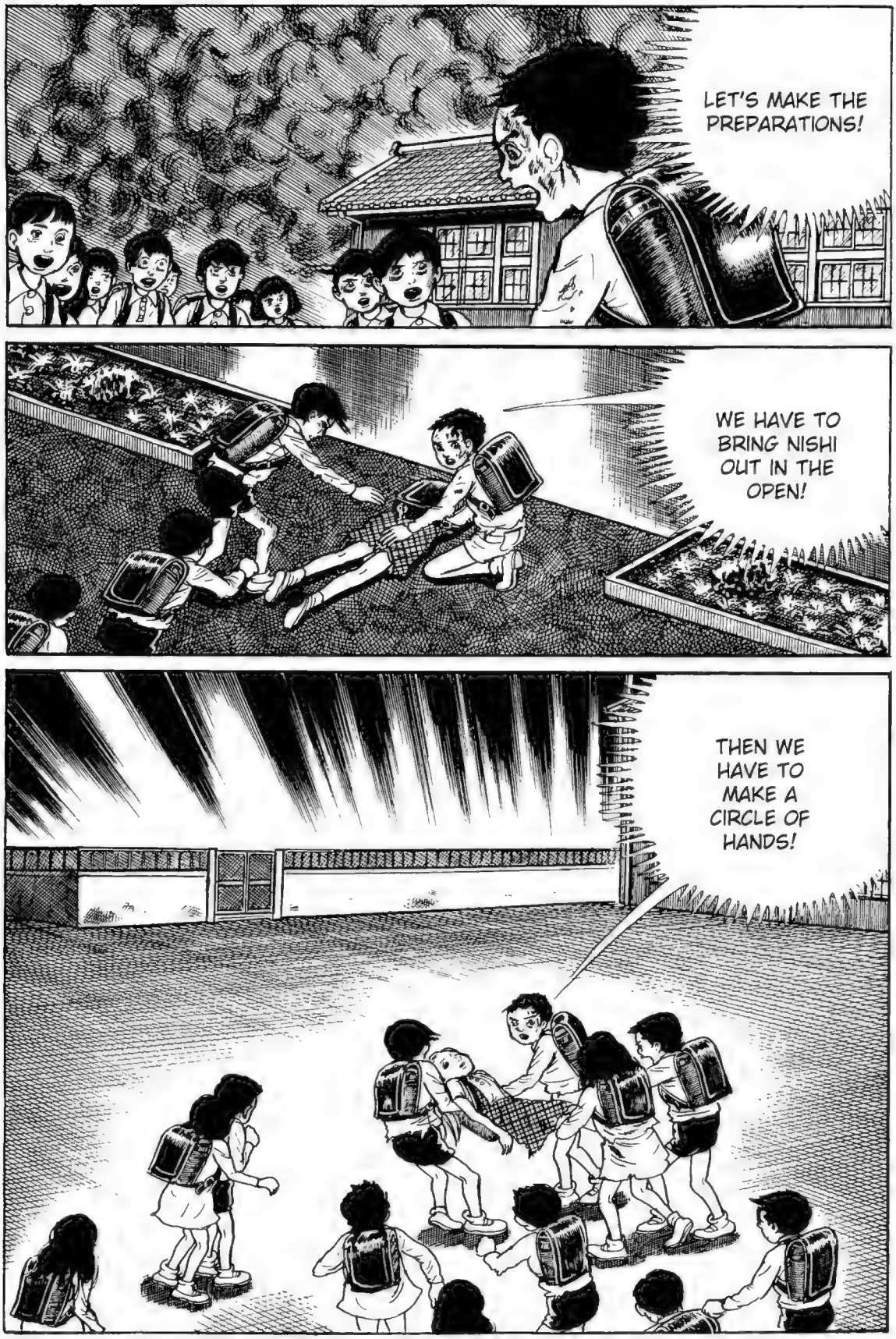

YOU MAY BE THE SMALLEST ONE HERE, BUT YOU'RE THE BRAVEST!

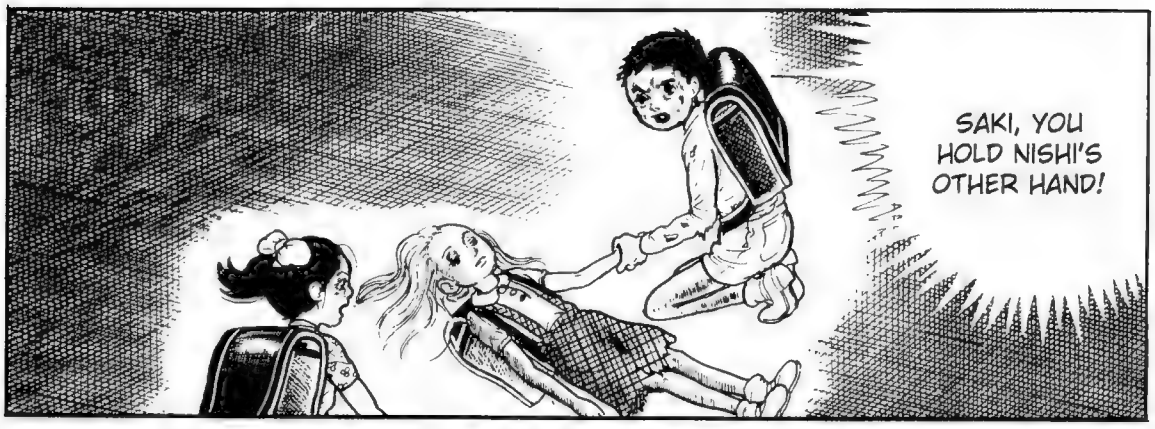

SO I'M GONNA SEE MY REAL MOM AND DAD?

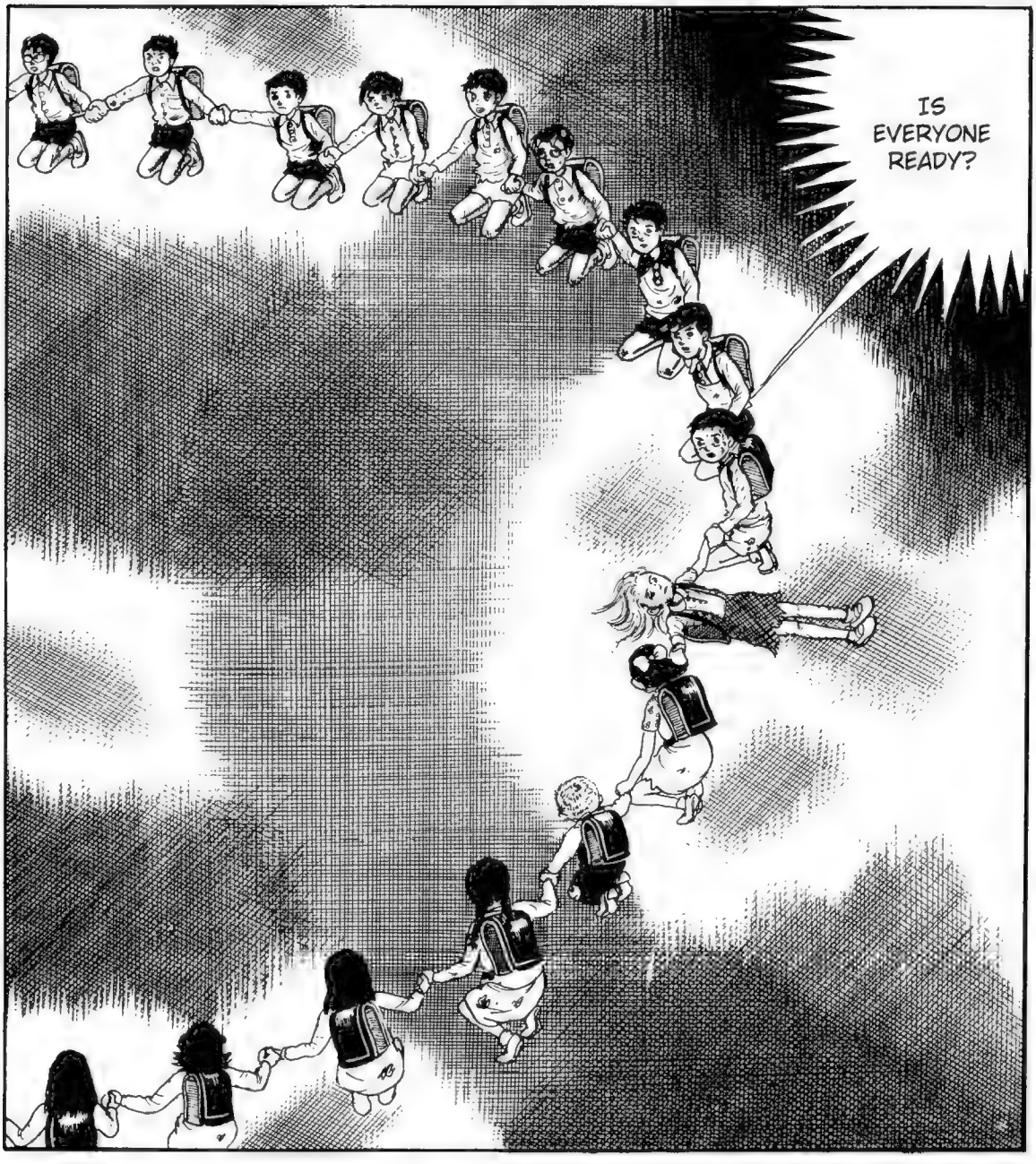

UH-HUH!

THAT'S RIGHT!

THEN I WANNA HELP YOU!

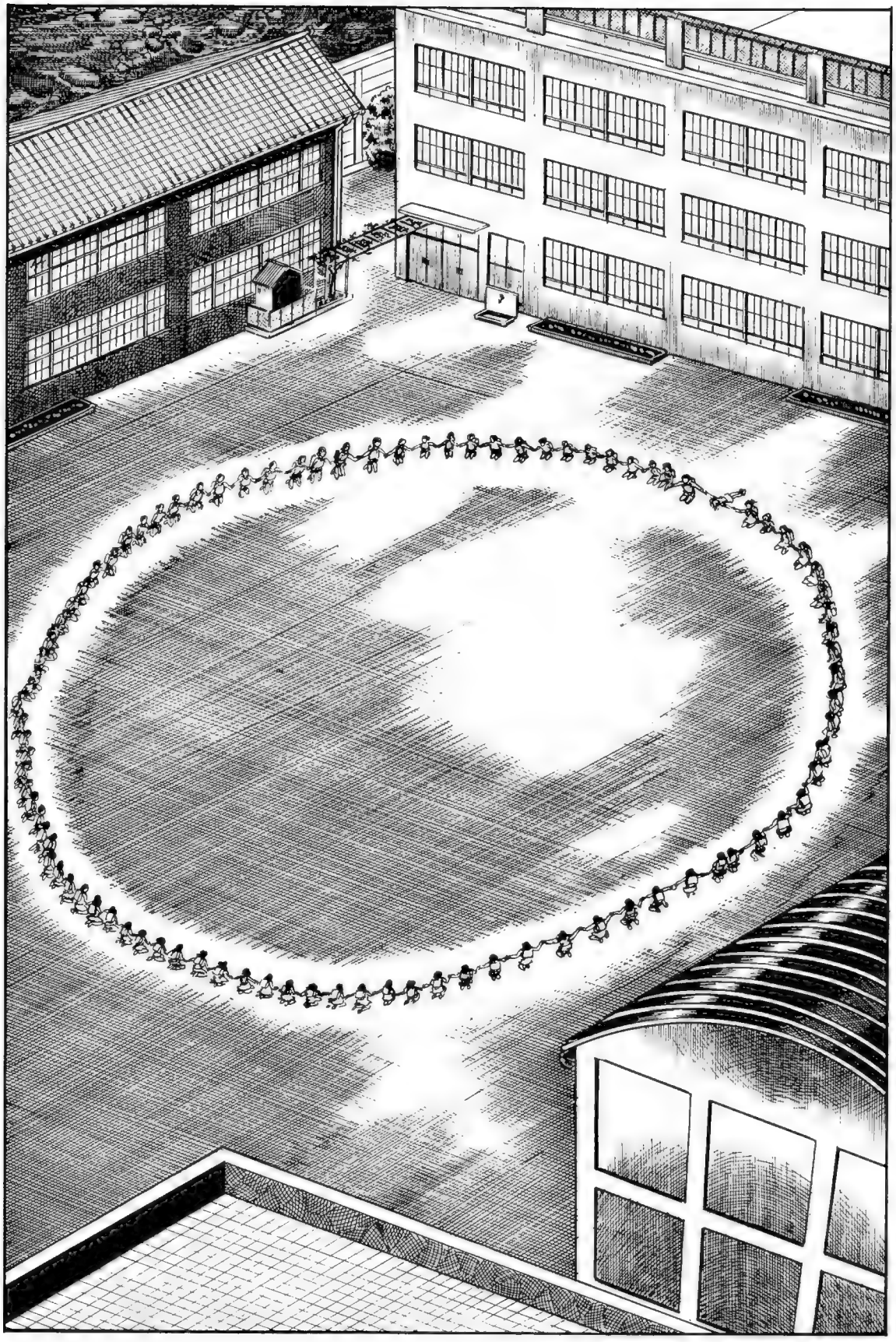

LET'S MAKE THE PREPARATIONS!
WE HAVE TO BRING NISHI OUT IN THE OPEN!
THEN WE HAVE TO MAKE A CIRCLE OF HANDS!


SAKI, YOU HOLD NISHI'S OTHER HAND!

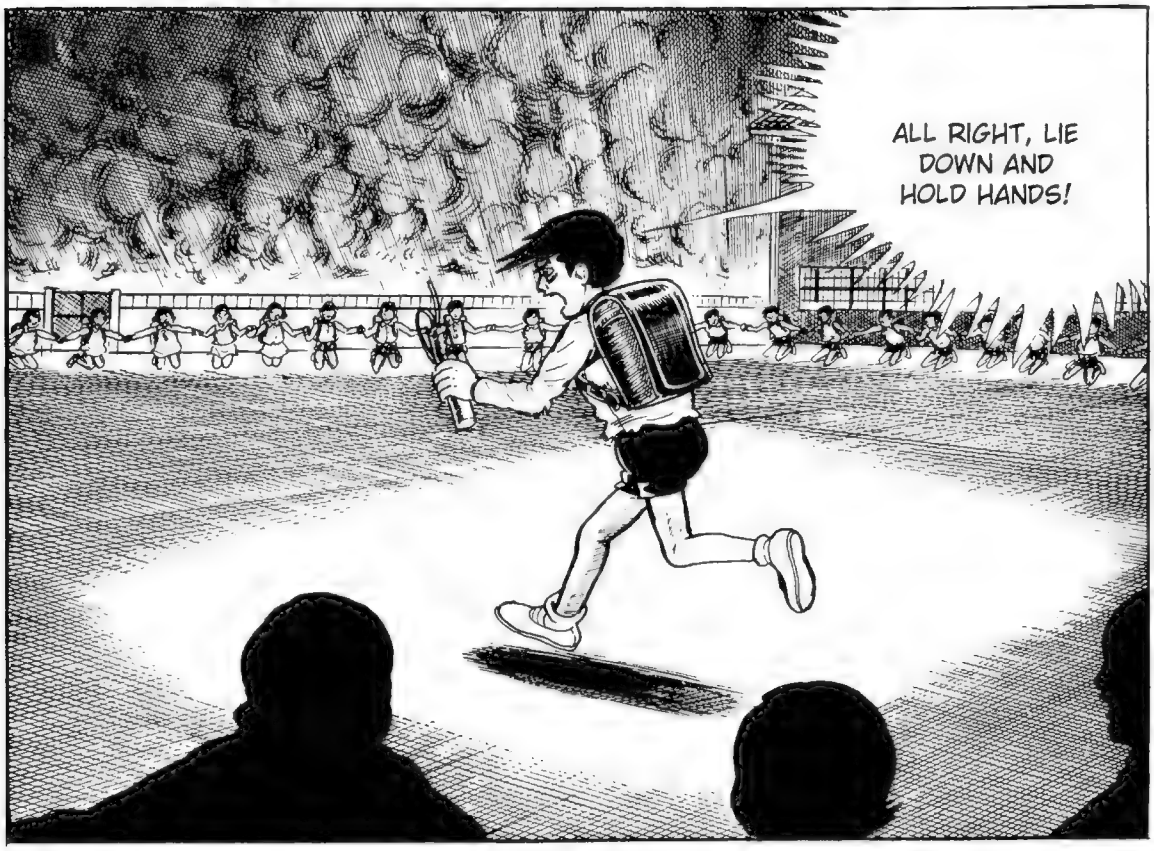

IS EVERYONE READY?

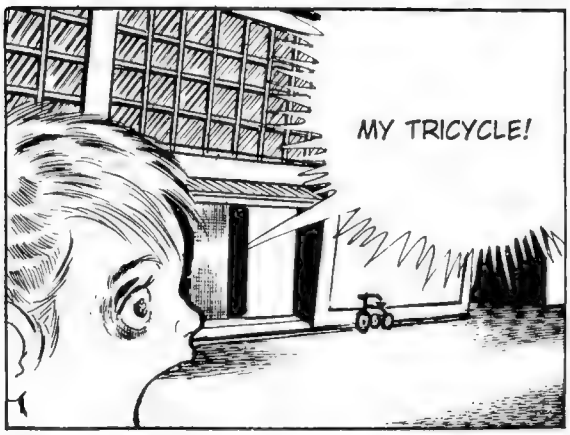
...THE WAY WE IMAGINED WE WERE CHAIRS WHEN THE GIANT INSECT ATTACKED US!
ONCE OTOMO LIGHTS THE FUSE, WE HAVE TO WISH TO GO HOME WITH ALL OUR MIGHT...

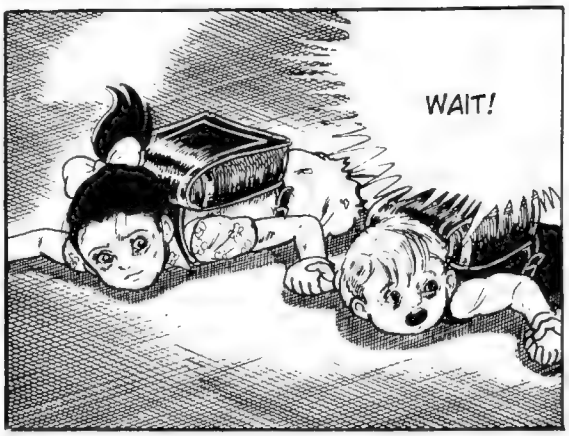
WE'LL CHANNEL OUR ENERGY THROUGH NISHI, AND SHE'LL OPEN A GATE TO OUR WORLD!

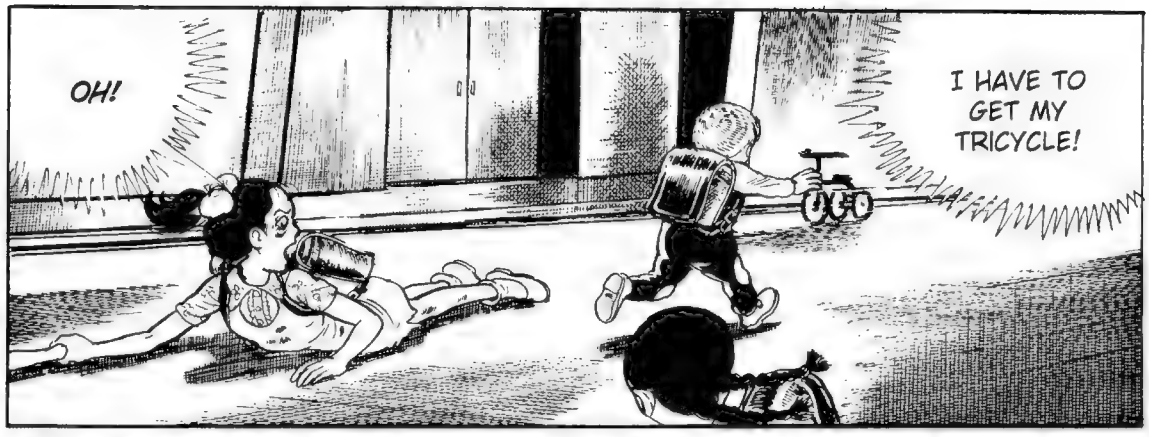


THIS IS IT, TAKAMATSU!


ALL RIGHT, LIE DOWN AND HOLD HANDS!

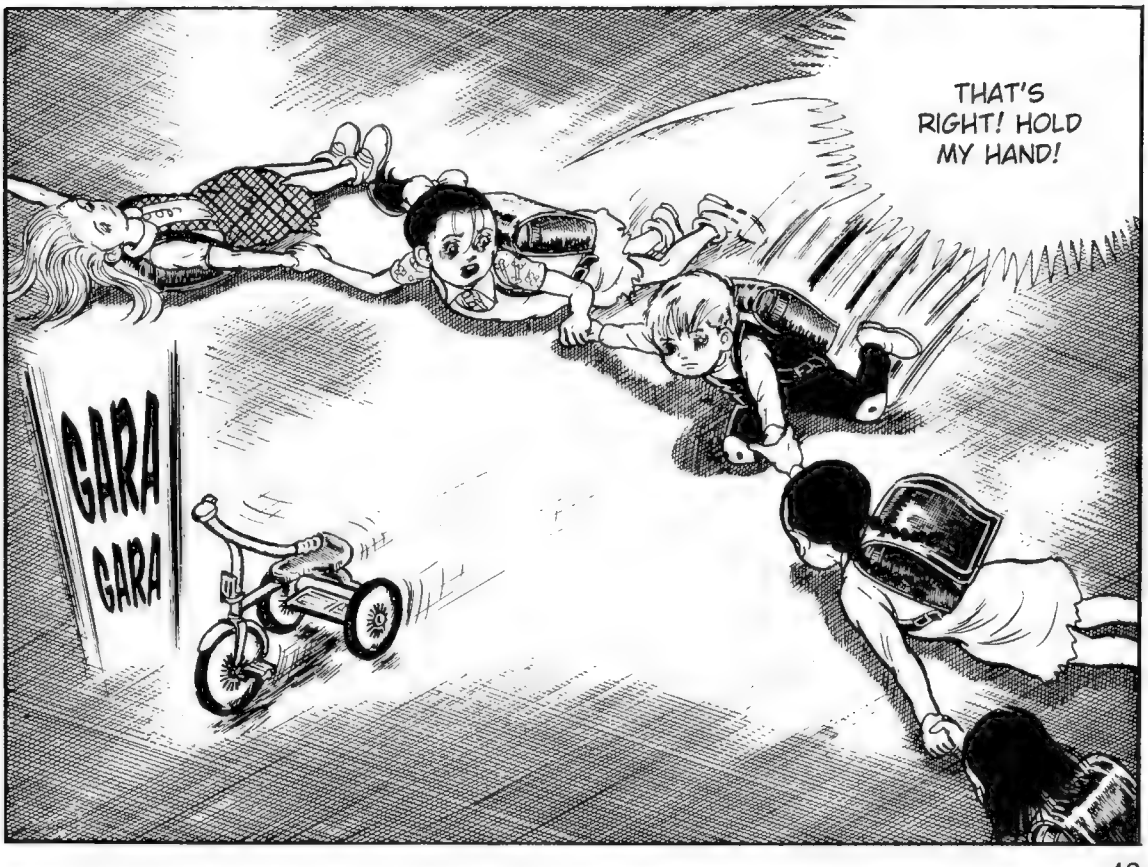

MY TRICYCLE!


WAIT!


OH!
I HAVE TO GET MY TRICYCLE!

GARA GARA

YU! COME BACK HERE!


THAT'S RIGHT! HOLD MY HAND!
GARA GARA

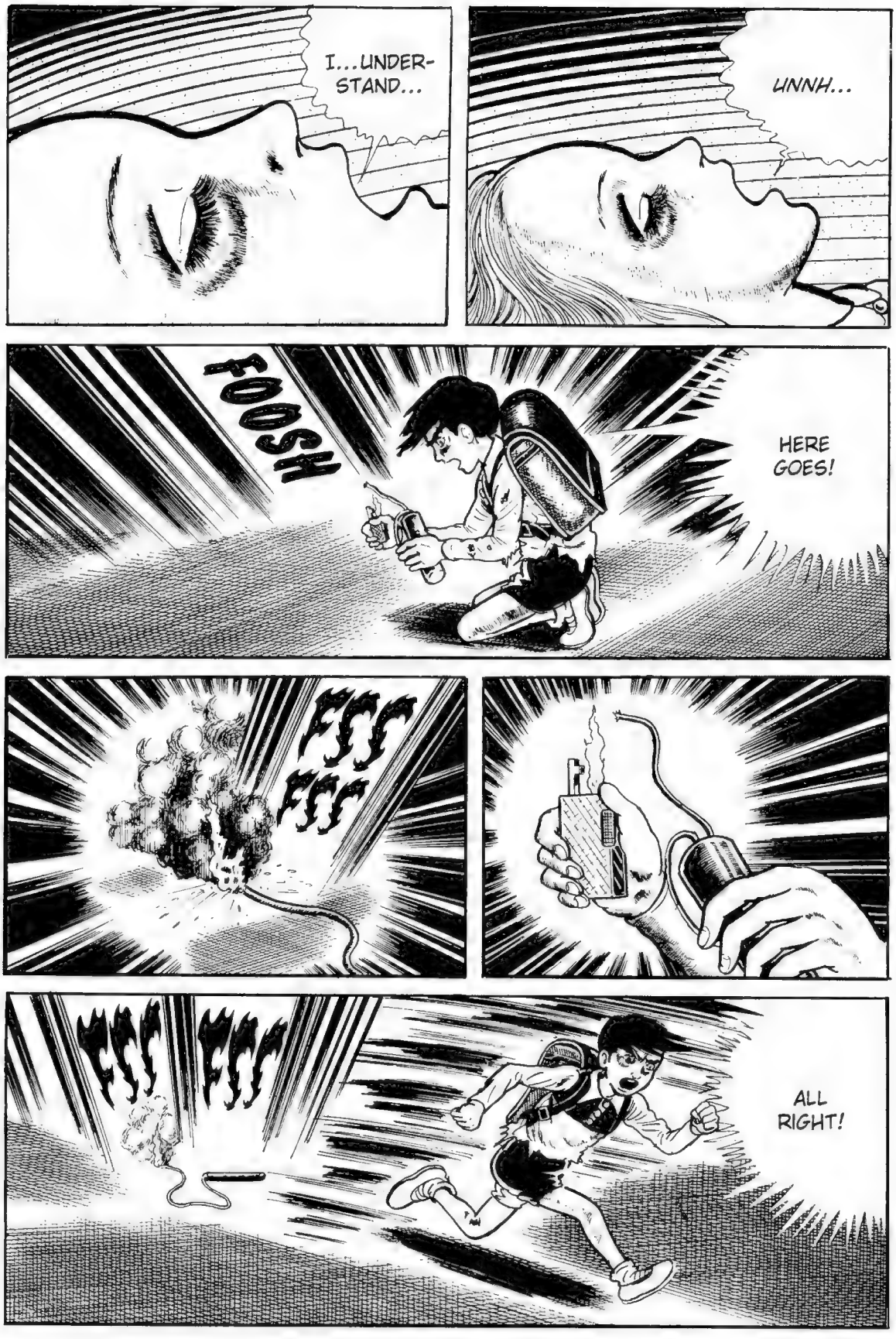
CAN YOU HEAR ME?! WE'RE ABOUT TO START!

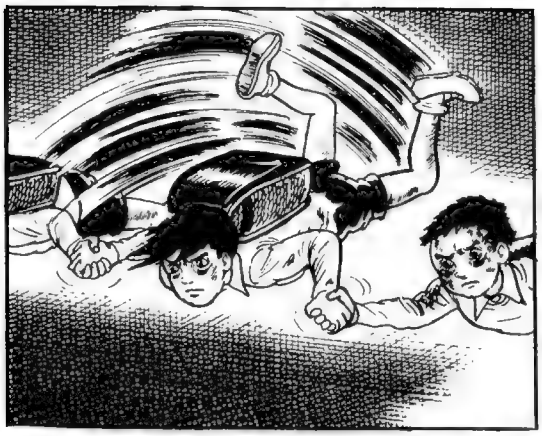
MOTHER!

WE NEED YOU TO HELP US!
WE'RE ALL GOING TO WISH WE WERE BACK HOME!

WE NEED YOU...

...AND EVERYONE IN JAPAN TO PRAY FOR OUR RETURN!


I...UNDER-
STAND...
UNNH...
FOOSH
HERE
GOES!
FFF
FFF
FFF
FFF
ALL
RIGHT!

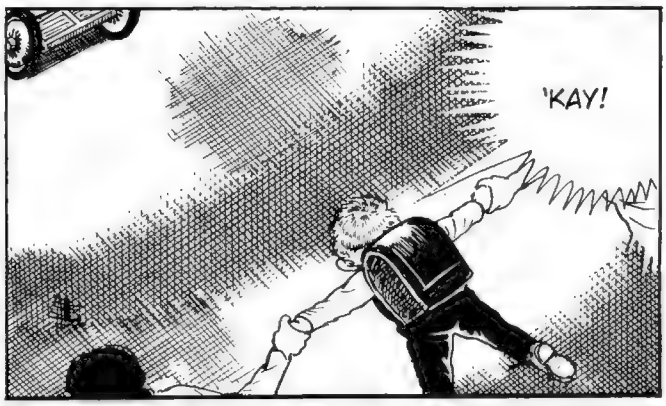


COME ON, OTOMO!

YU! JUST THINK, "I WANT TO GO HOME"!

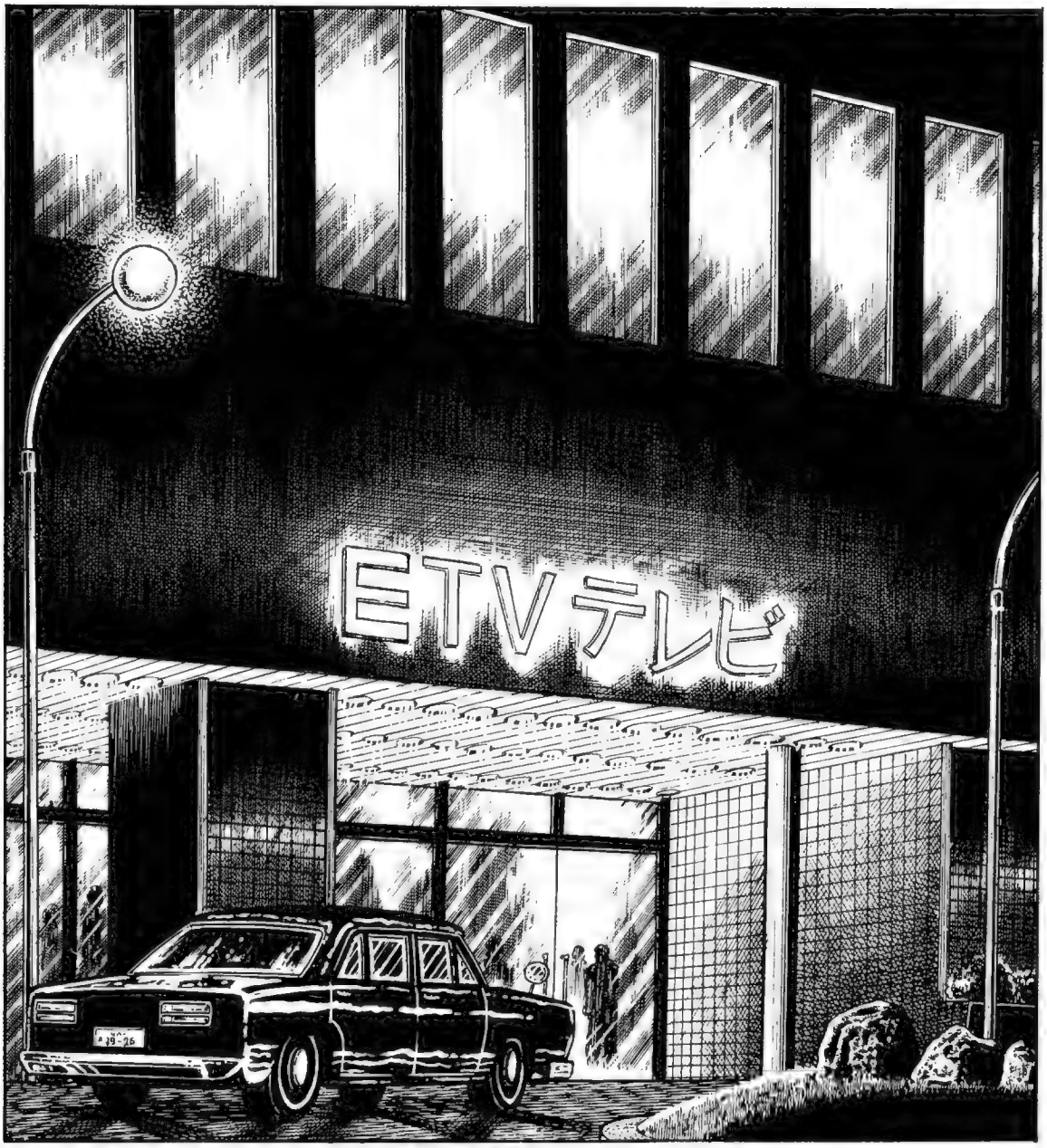
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE WISH AS HARD AS YOU CAN!

FSS
FSS


'KAY!

FSS
FSS

ETVテレビ

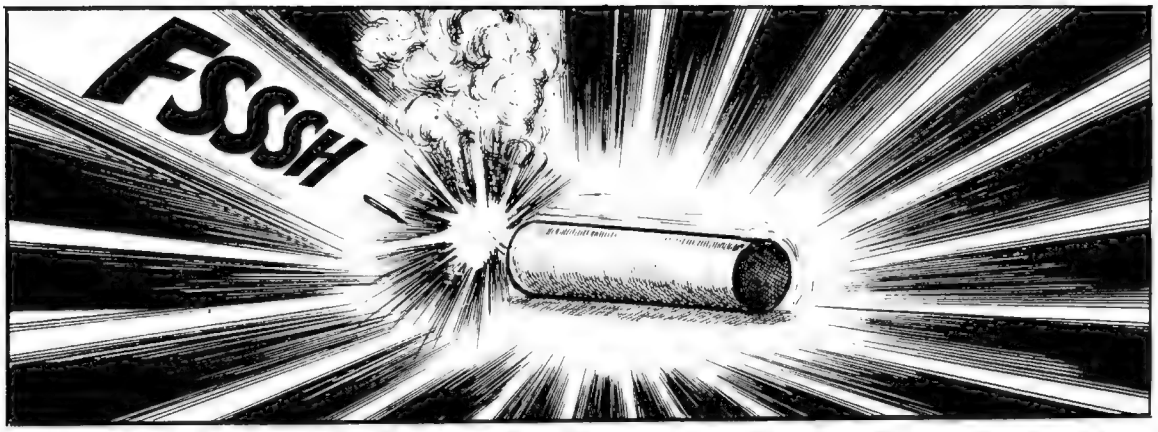


WOW!
HEY, HEY!
YAAY
EEE
EEE
EEE
ANGEL FOUR
WHEEE
WHEEE
THAT WAS THE ANGEL FOUR WITH THEIR HIT SINGLE.
NOW LET'S TALK TO SOME FOLKS WHO REALLY KNOW THE ANGEL FOUR BACK HOME.
EEE! HITOMI!
YUTAKA!

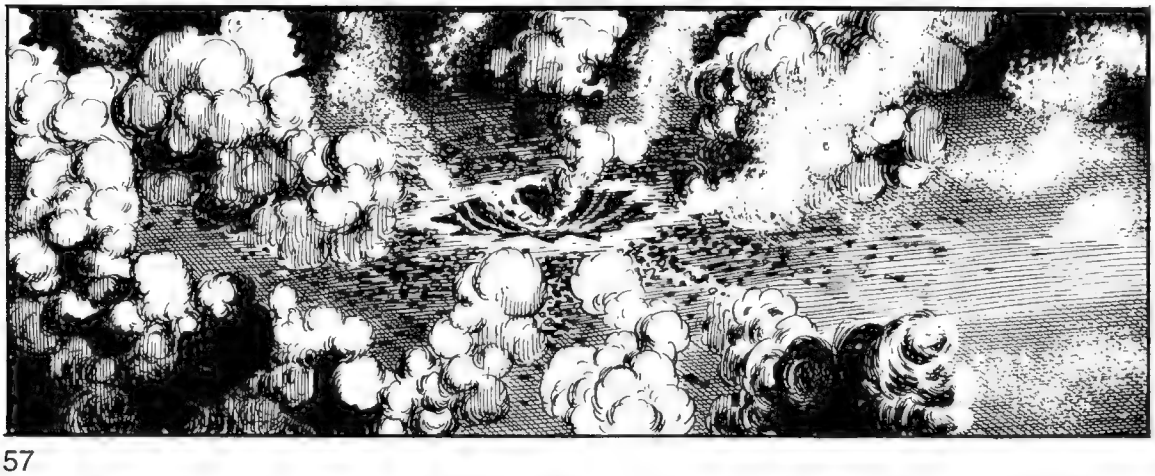
WELCOME TO THE SHOW!
HERE'S OUR FIRST GUEST.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! CITIZENS OF JAPAN!

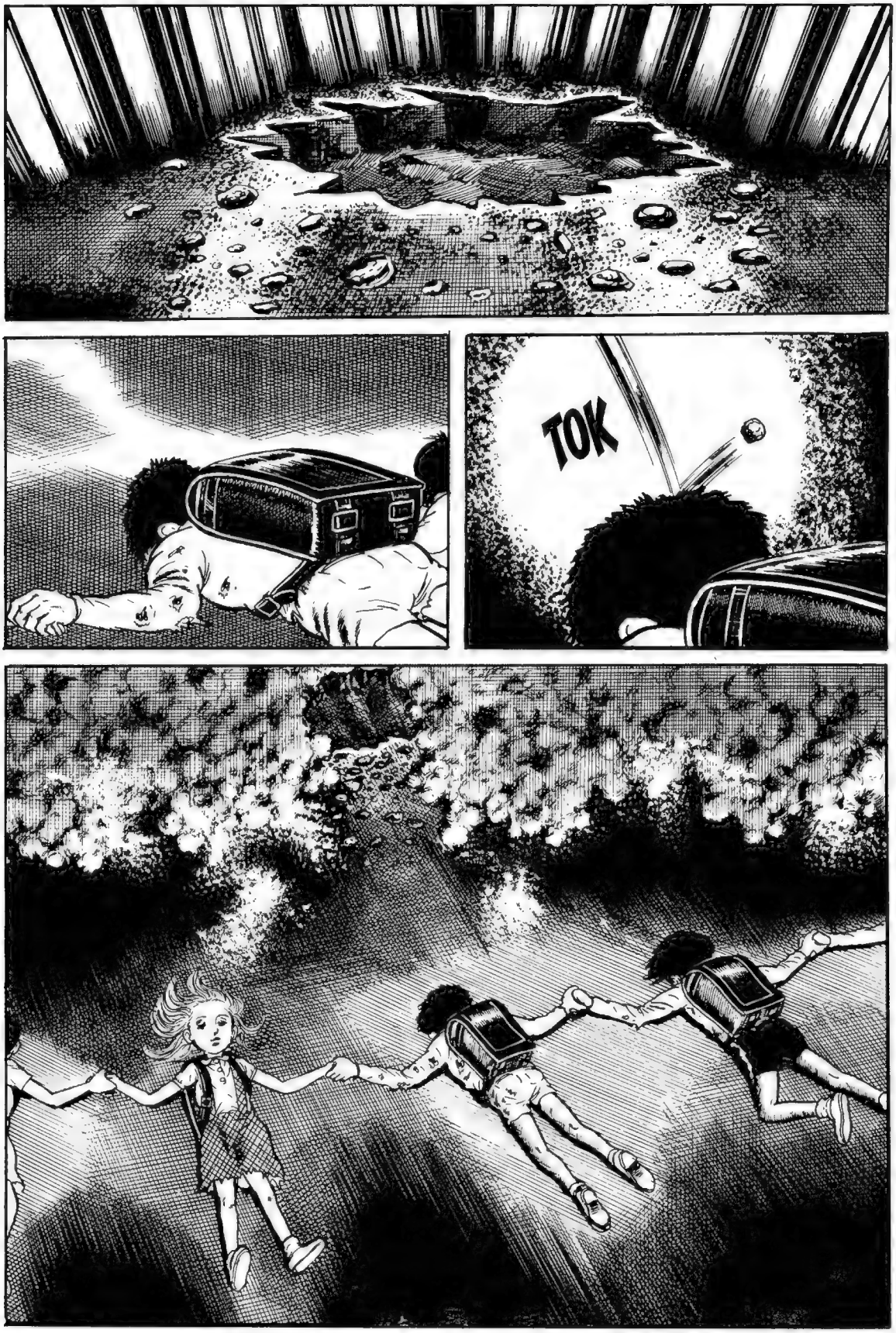
*SIGN=TV STORE

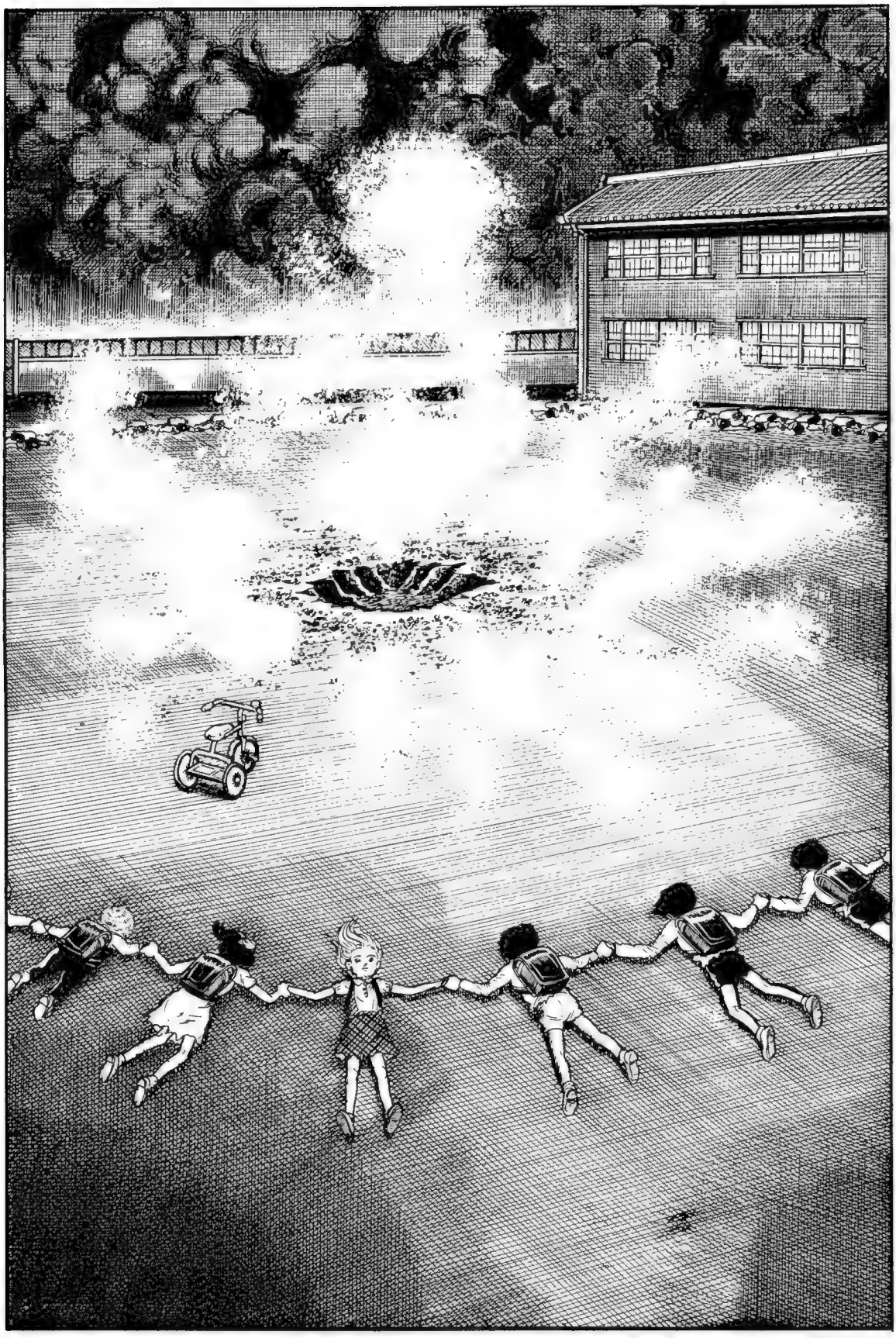
HUH?!
...WISH AS HARD AS YOU CAN... FOR THEIR RETURN!
EEE EEE
WH-WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
SURE, LET'S TRY.
"WISH AS HARD AS YOU CAN"?

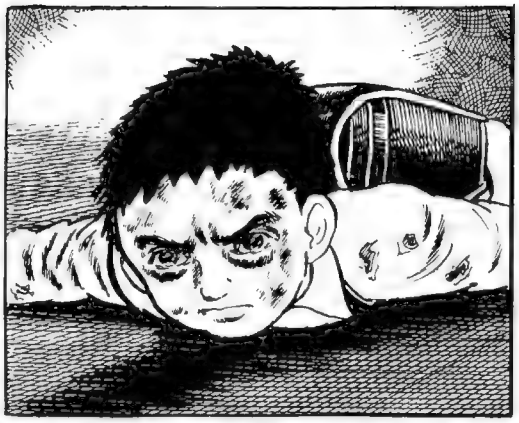

FSSSH

BAM




TOK

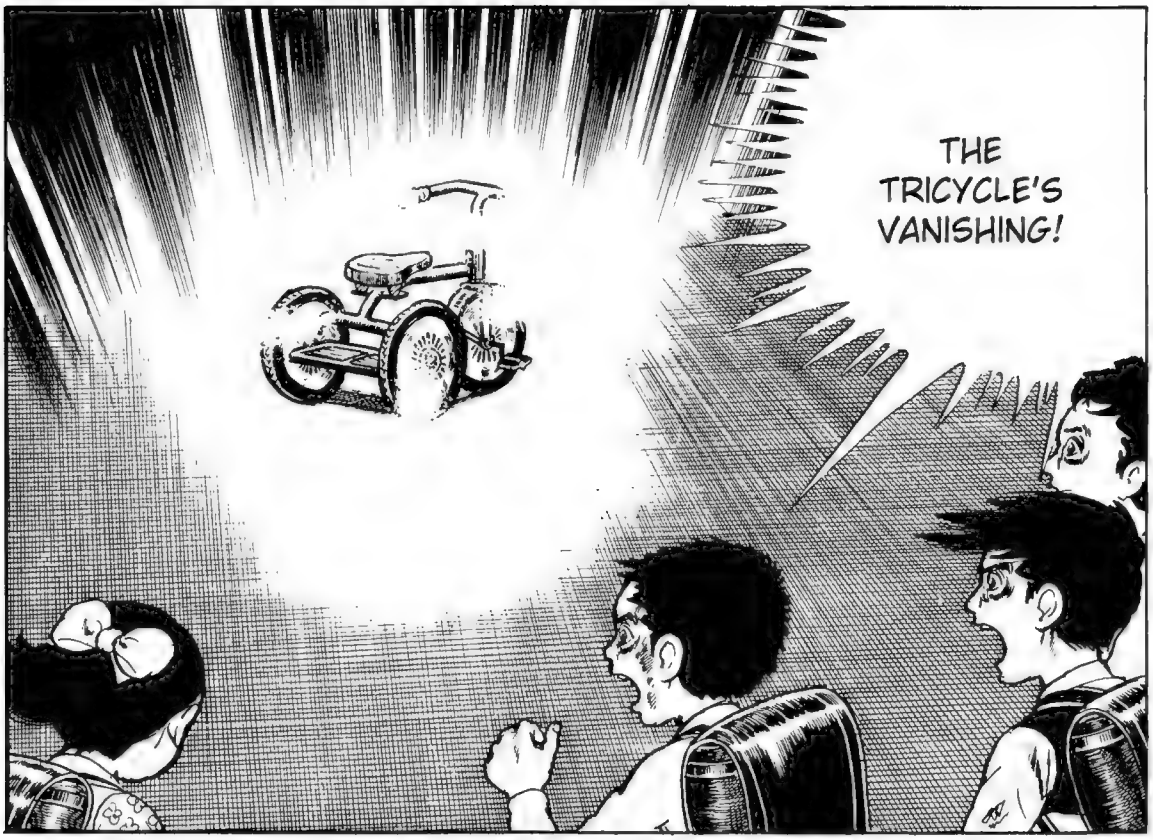


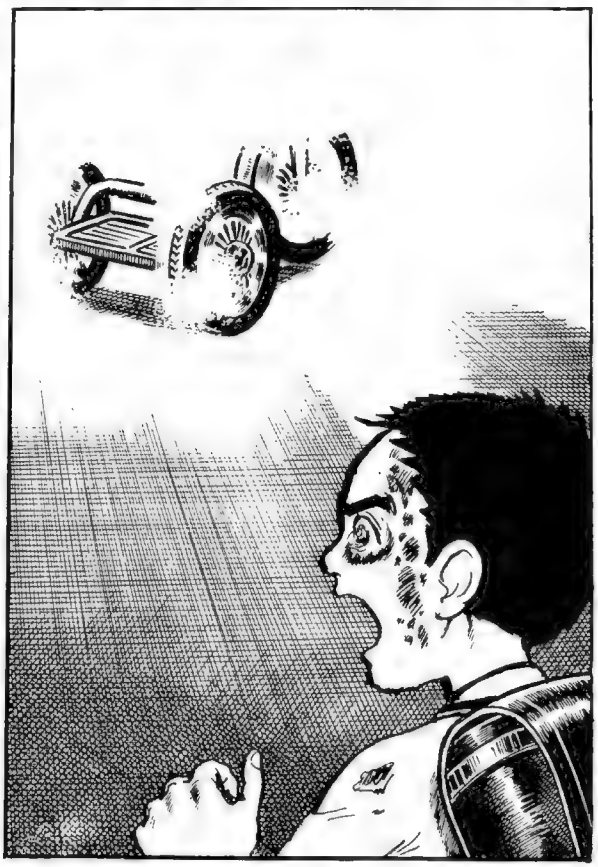


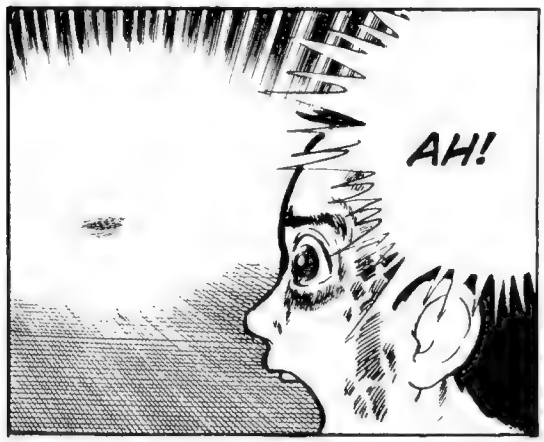
IT DIDN'T WORK!
NOTHING'S CHANGED!

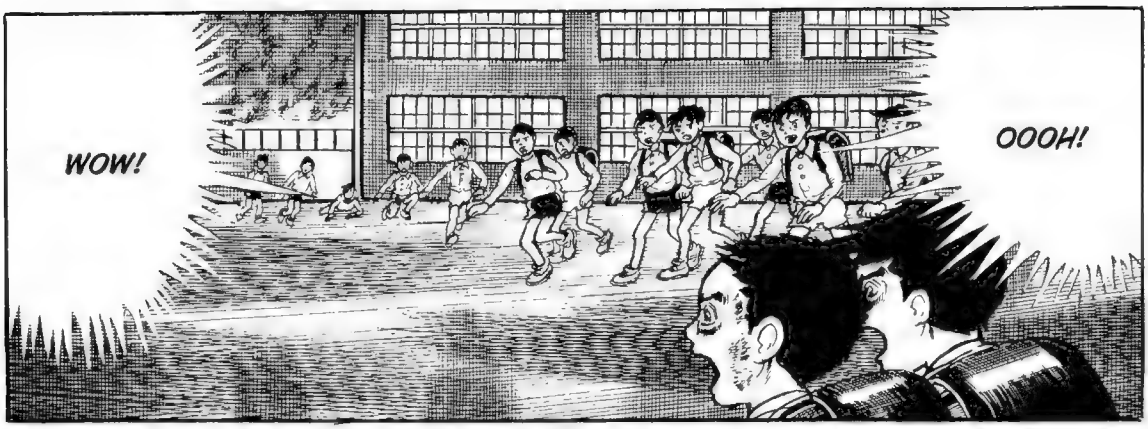
NO!!!

W-WAIT A MINUTE! LOOK!

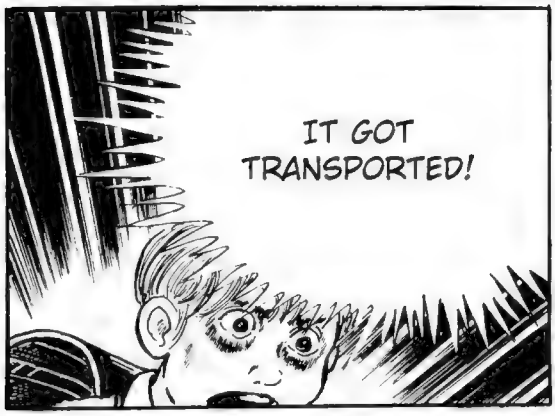

THE TRICYCLE'S VANISHING!




AH!


WOW!
OOOH!

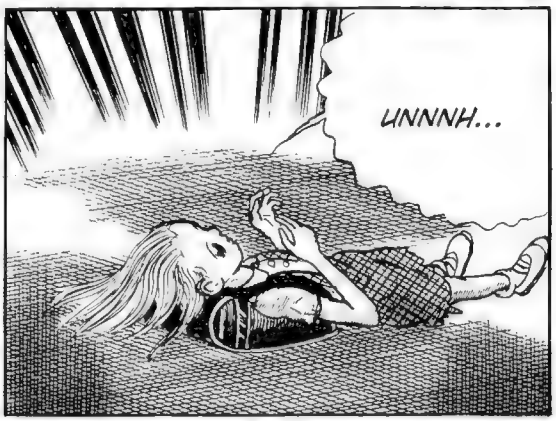
I-IT'S GONE!

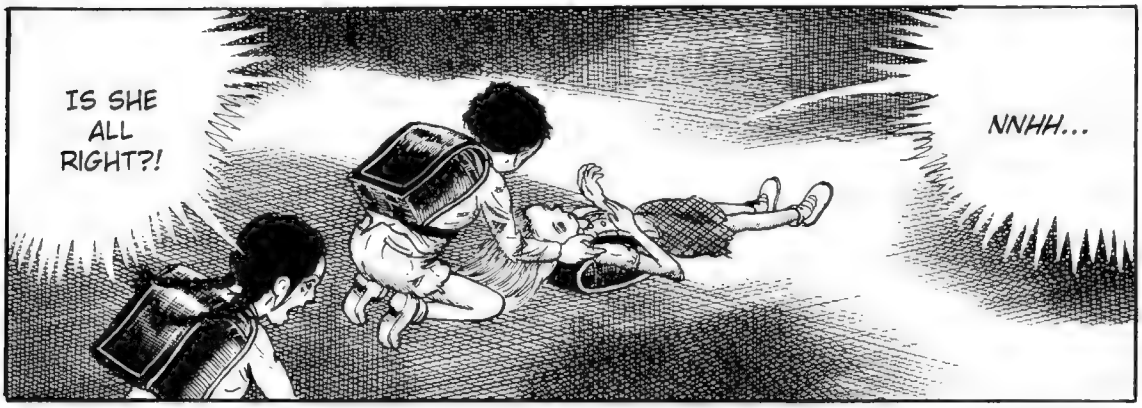

IT GOT TRANSPORTED!

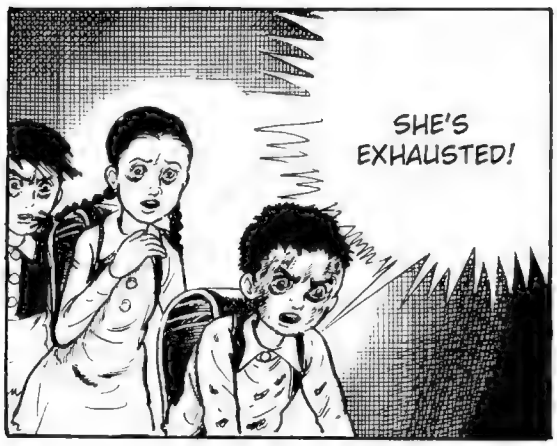
BUT WE'RE STILL HERE!

WHY?! WE CONCENTRATED SO HARD!

NISHI!


UNNNH...


IS SHE ALL RIGHT?!
NNHH...


SHE'S EXHAUSTED!

HAAH... HAAH...

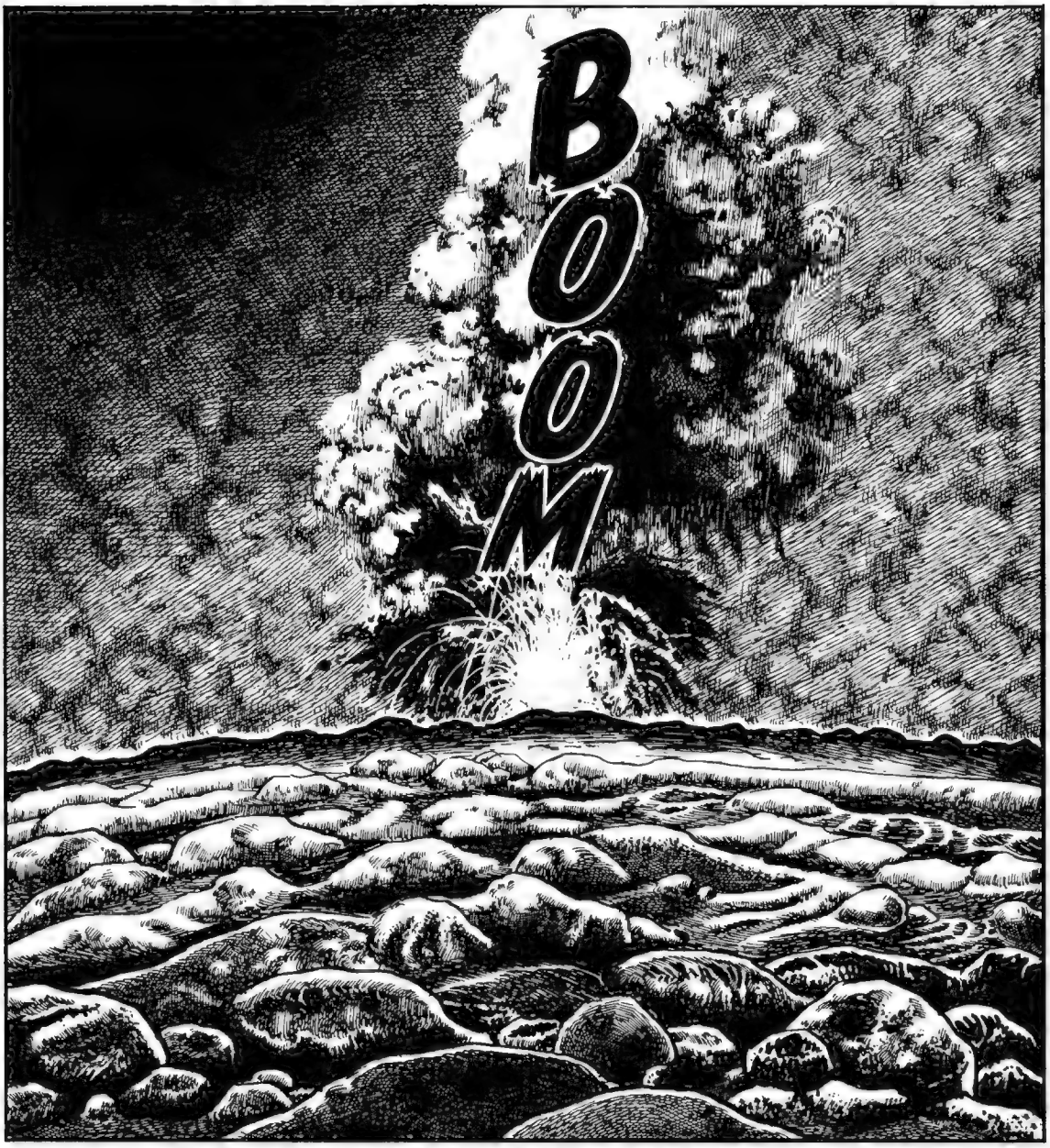
M-MAYBE THERE'S NO WAY FOR US TO RETURN!

W-W-WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THIS AGAIN!
UM...UH... TH-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SAW THE TRICYCLE VANISH!

IT'S A QUAKE!

R-R-R

WAAHH!
BMB BMB

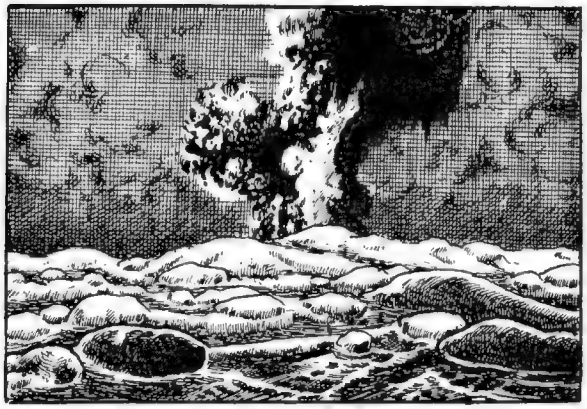

BOOM

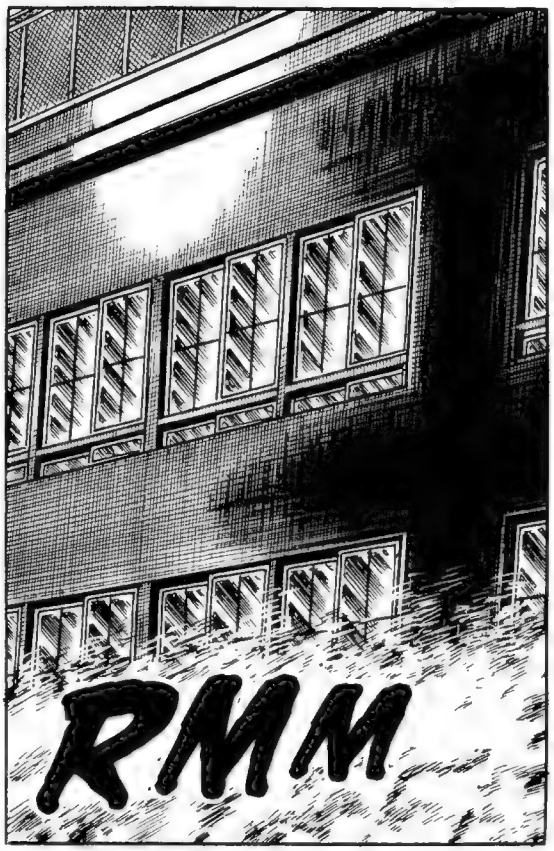
THE VOLCANO'S ERUPTING!
TH-THE...

ARRGH!
R-R-R-R-
THE DYNAMITE MUST HAVE TRIGGERED IT!

R- R- R-

AIEEE!
R- R-




RMM

BUT IT'LL START UP AGAIN!
IT'S STOPPED!

IF THE ASH AND LAVA REACH THIS FAR, IT MIGHT DESTROY THE SCHOOL!

WHAT?!

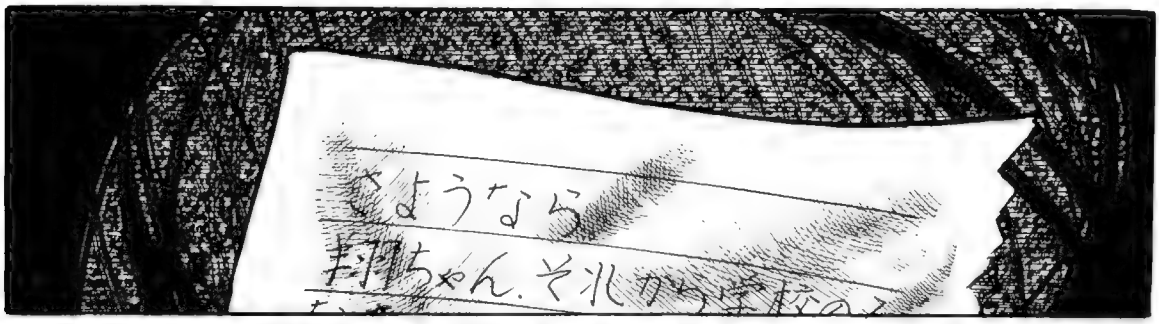
HEY! WHERE'S SAKIKO?

SAKI!

SHE'S GONE!
DID ANYONE SEE HER?

THERE'S A PAPER WHERE SHE WAS!

GASP!


さようなら
翔ちゃん。それから学校のみな

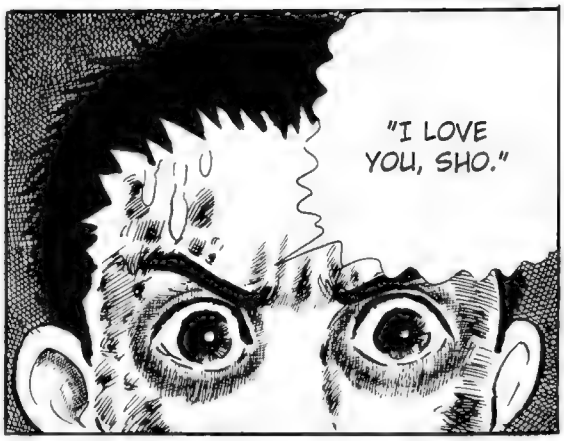
"GOODBYE, SHO. GOODBYE, EVERYONE. IT'S MY FAULT WE COULDN'T RETURN TO OUR WORLD."
さようなら。
翔ちゃん それから学校のみな
さん。もとの世界に帰れなか
ったのはわたしのせいです。わたし
はきっと心のおくでもとの世界
へ帰りたく

"...WAS BECAUSE SOMEWHERE DEEP IN MY HEART I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BACK."
"I THINK THE REASON IT DIDN'T WORK..."

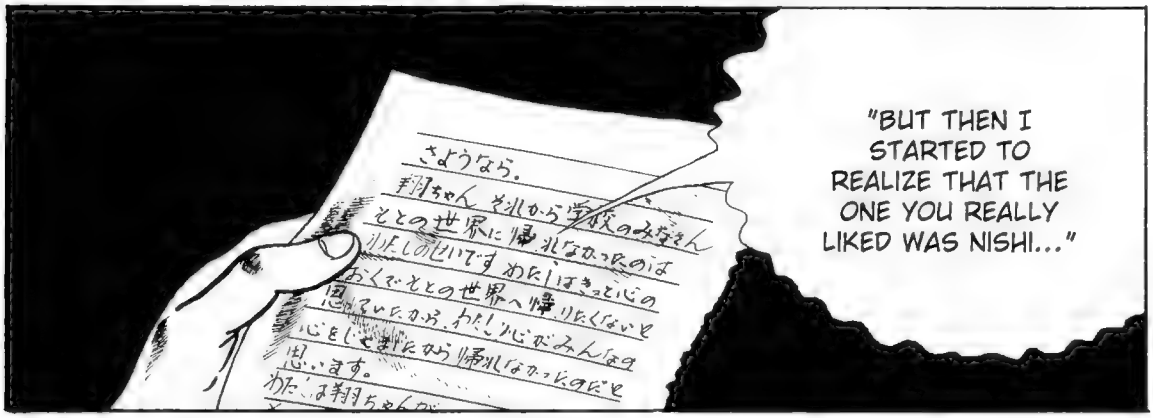
WHAT IS IT?
"I..."

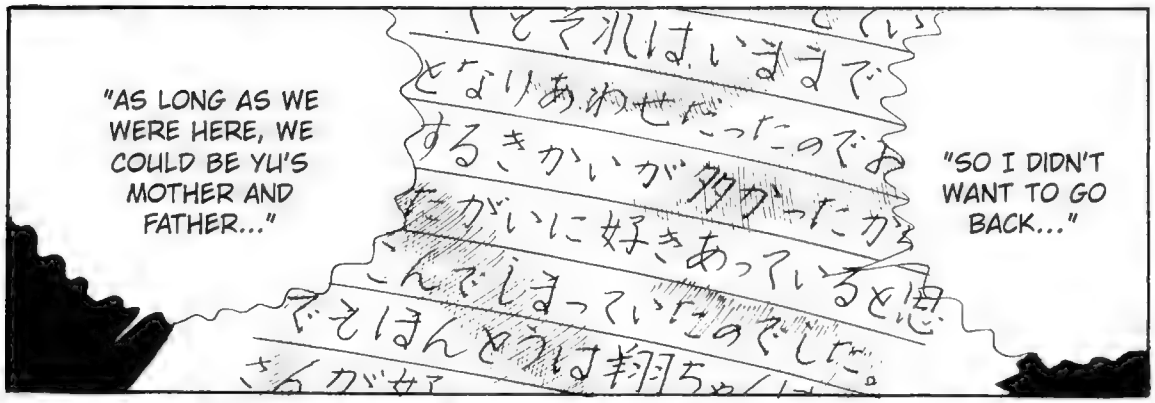
COME ON! KEEP READING!

"I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU."


"I LOVE YOU, SHO."

"WE ALWAYS SAT NEXT TO EACH OTHER IN CLASS, AND WE SPENT SO MUCH TIME TALKING THAT FOR A WHILE I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME BACK."


"BUT THEN I STARTED TO REALIZE THAT THE ONE YOU REALLY LIKED WAS NISHI..."


"AS LONG AS WE WERE HERE, WE COULD BE YU'S MOTHER AND FATHER..."
"SO I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BACK..."

"BUT BACK HOME WE WOULDN'T BE...A MOTHER AND FATHER ANYMORE..."

KRSH

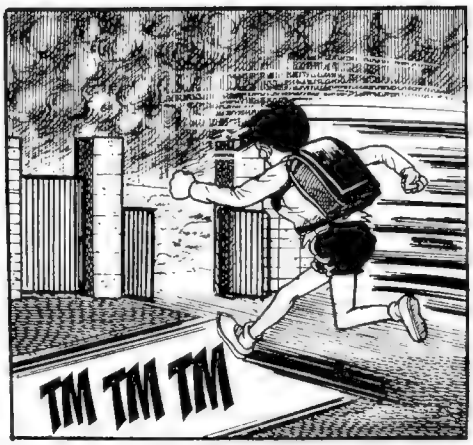
"SO I'M LEAVING YOU. FORGIVE ME. GOODBYE."

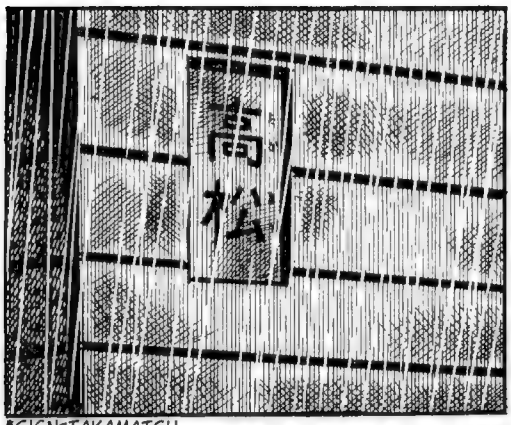
HOLD ON, TAKAMATSU! LET ME GO!

SAKI!

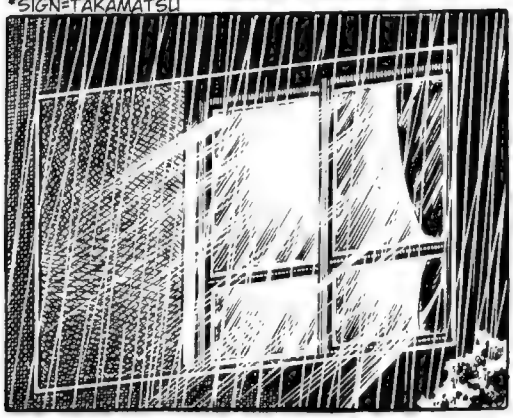
I THINK I KNOW WHERE SHE MIGHT HAVE GONE!
YOU STAY HERE AND HOLD THE FORT!

SAKI! WAIT!


TM TM TM



*SIGN=TAKAMATSU

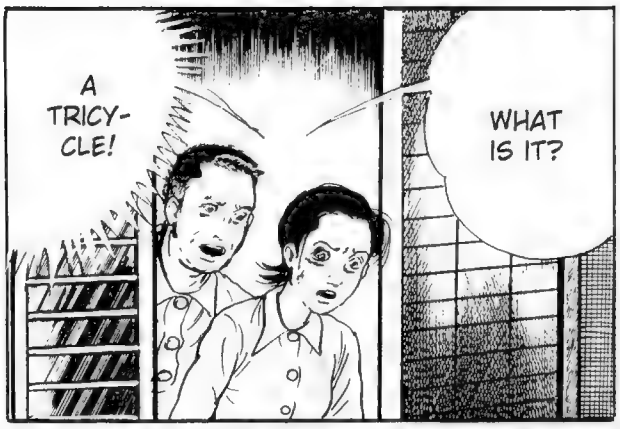


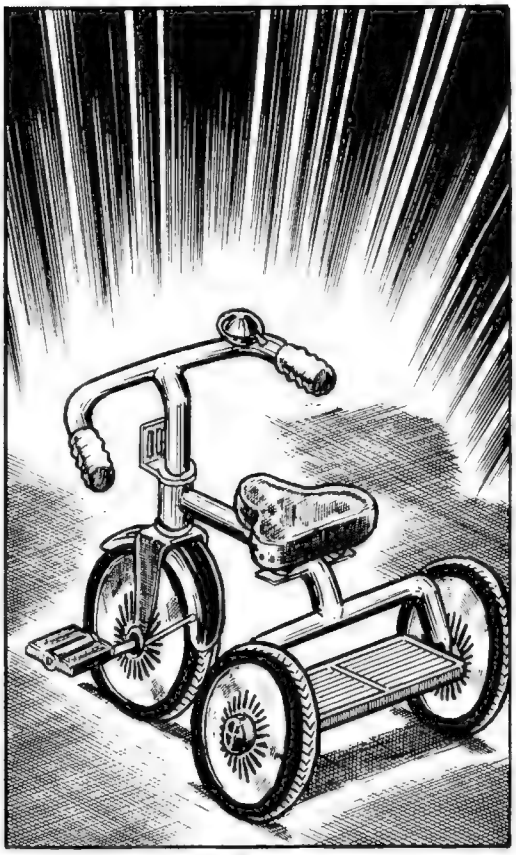
EMIKO!
EMIKO!
COME ON!
WH-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
GO TO BED AND GET SOME REST!
PHEW...I ALMOST THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
REMEMBER WHEN YOU INTERRUPTED THE TV SHOW? I HEARD THAT KIDS ALL OVER JAPAN WISHED FOR SHO AND HIS FRIENDS TO COME BACK! WE'VE ALL WISHED FOR IT!
BUT YOU THINK ABOUT HIM ALL THE TIME!
I'M GOING TO KEEP THINKING OF SHO...SO HE CAN COME BACK...

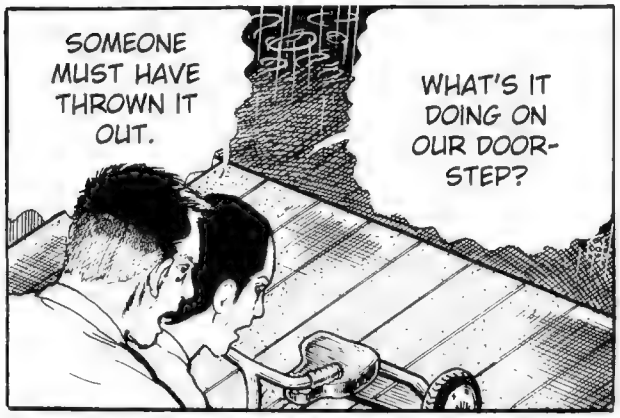
THUMP
SHAAA...
KLANK
WHO'S THERE?!

IT COULDN'T BE...

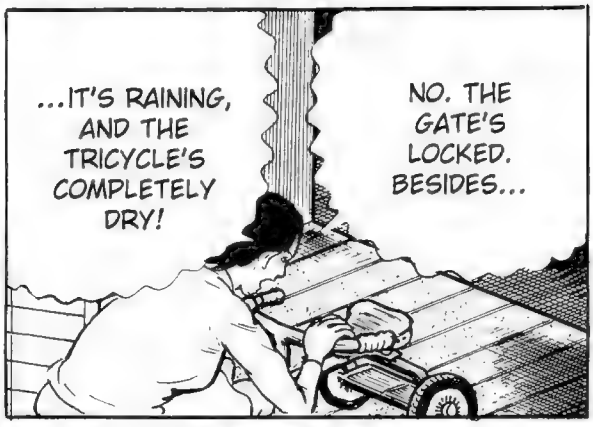
KREEK


A TRICY-CLE!
WHAT IS IT?




SOMEONE MUST HAVE THROWN IT OUT.
WHAT'S IT DOING ON OUR DOOR-STEP?

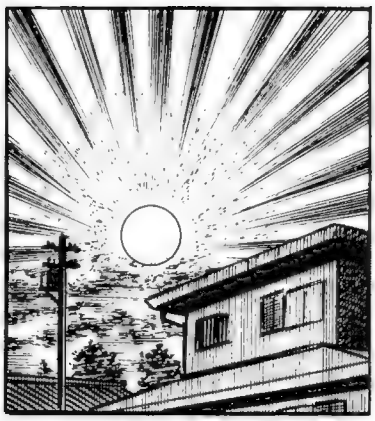
THIS MUST BE A SIGN...
...HE'S COMING BACK!

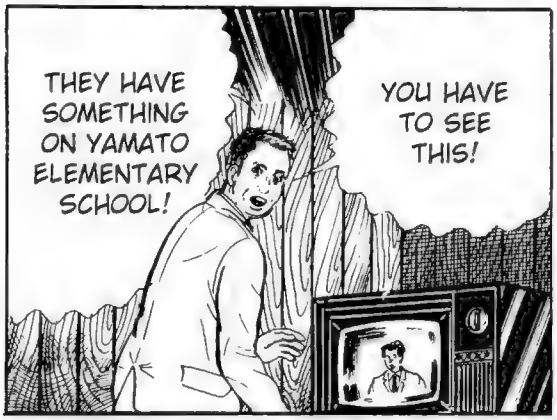

...IT'S RAINING, AND THE TRICYCLE'S COMPLETELY DRY!
NO. THE GATE'S LOCKED. BESIDES...

WHOSE IS IT? SHO DOESN'T HAVE A TRICYCLE... BUT...
HOW'D IT GET HERE?

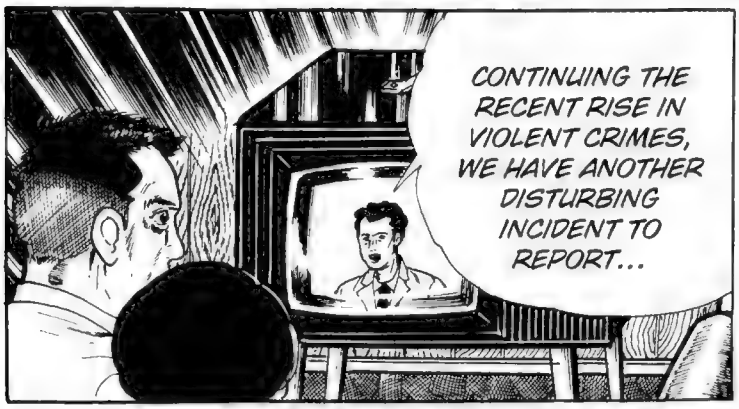
OH GOOD. IT'S STILL HERE!

TUMP




THEY HAVE SOMETHING ON YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
YOU HAVE TO SEE THIS!

IT'S A SIGN SHO'S COMING HOME!
I'M LEAVING THIS TRICYCLE RIGHT WHERE IT IS.

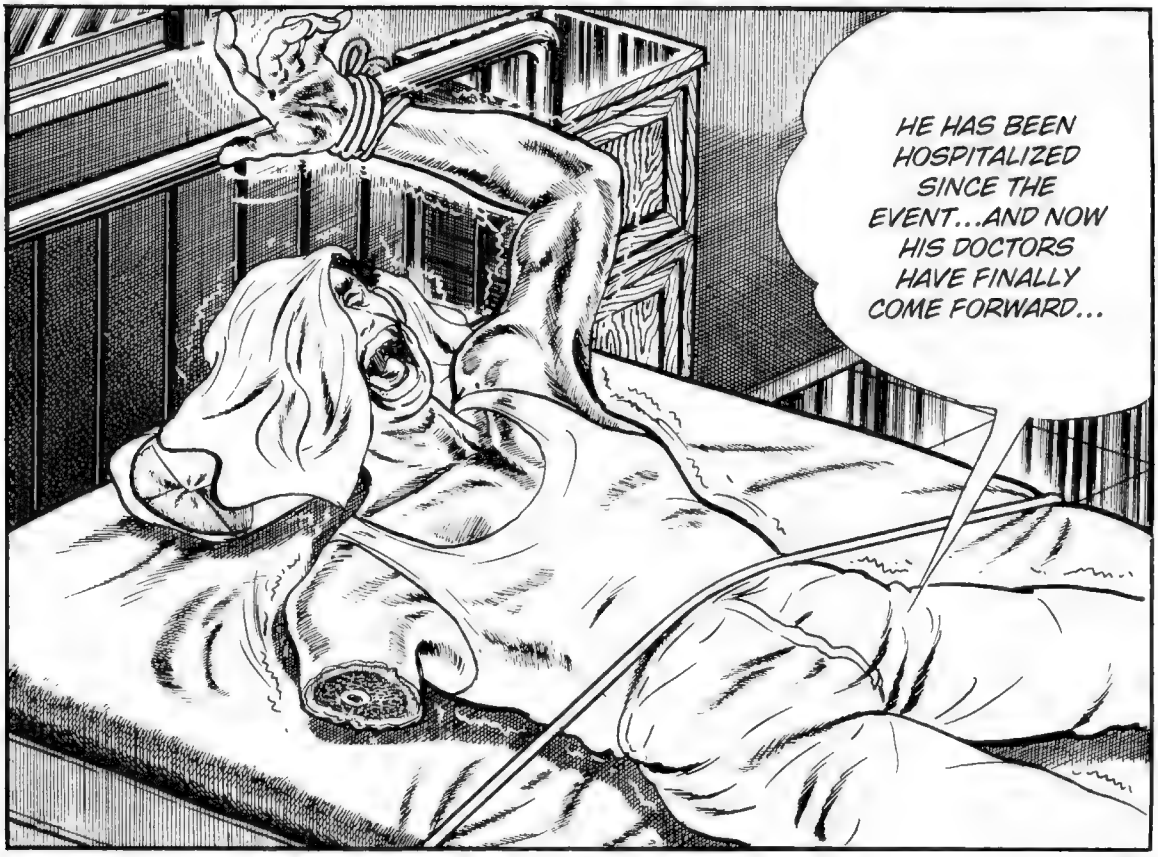

CONTINUING THE RECENT RISE IN VIOLENT CRIMES, WE HAVE ANOTHER DISTURBING INCIDENT TO REPORT...

WHAT?!

HIS NAME IS SHUYA BANAI, 23 YEARS OLD. ACCORDING TO HIS TESTIMONY...
AS YOU MAY RECALL, A FUGITIVE WAS APPREHENDED NEAR YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHORTLY AFTER IT VANISHED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

逮捕された
馬内守也
SHUYA BANAI
...HE AND AN ACCOMPLICE, TOKUJU HASEDA, HAD BURGLARIZED THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. HOWEVER, AS THEY PROCEEDED TO LEAVE...

...THE SCHOOL DISAPPEARED WITH A LOUD EXPLOSION. HASEDA WAS KILLED IN THE BLAST, BUT SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENED TO BANAI...


HE HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED SINCE THE EVENT...AND NOW HIS DOCTORS HAVE FINALLY COME FORWARD...

H-HELP ME!
AGHH
I'M IN PAIN!
MY ARM!
DO SOME-THING ABOUT MY ARM!

NO, IT'S NOT!

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR RIGHT ARM IS GONE.

LOOK! WHEN I SWING IT LIKE THIS...
IT'S NOT!

I CAN FEEL THE SAND AND THE PEBBLES!

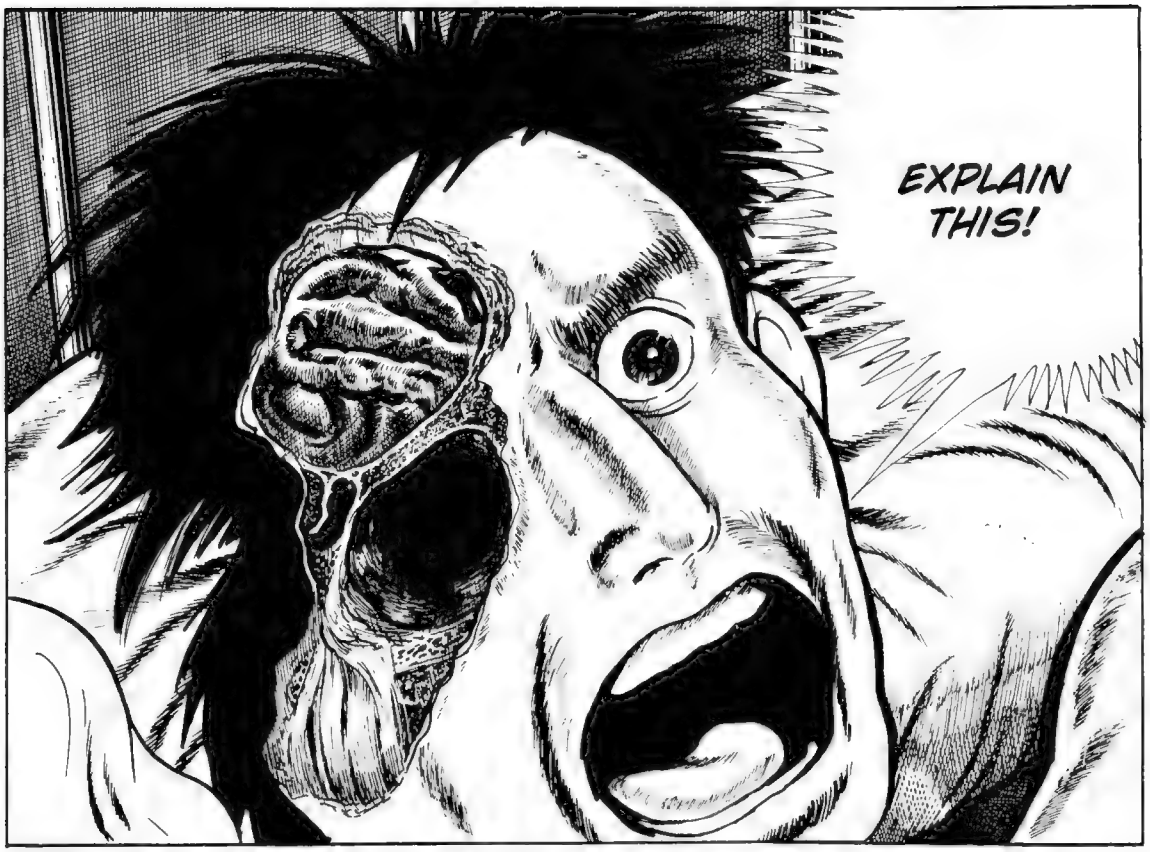
MY WHOLE BODY WILL ROT AWAY!
BUT IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING, IT'LL DRY UP!

I CAN EVEN GRAB THE PEBBLES!

BR-BRING IT BACK TO ME!
MY ARM'S SOMEWHERE ELSE!

EVEN A CHILD KNOWS THAT A SEVERED ARM COULDN'T SURVIVE! IT WOULD DIE...IT WOULD ROT AWAY!
BE QUIET! I SAID YOU HAVE NO RIGHT ARM! IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR AMPUTEES TO HALLUCINATE THE PRESENCE OF MISSING LIMBS.

THEN EXPLAIN *THIS!*


EXPLAIN THIS!

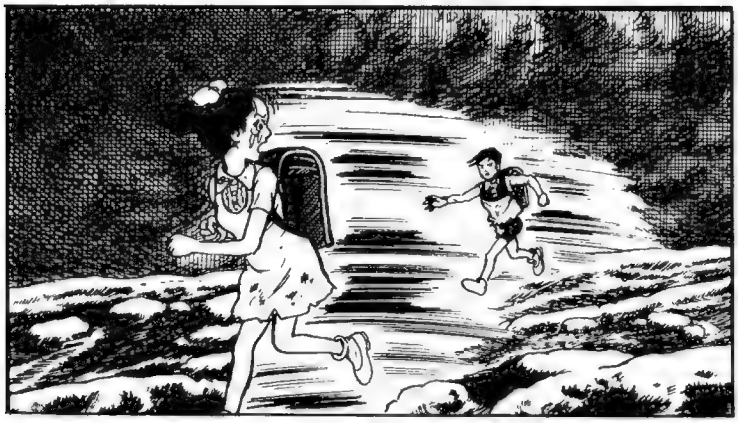
COME ON!

URGGH ...!

AIEEE!

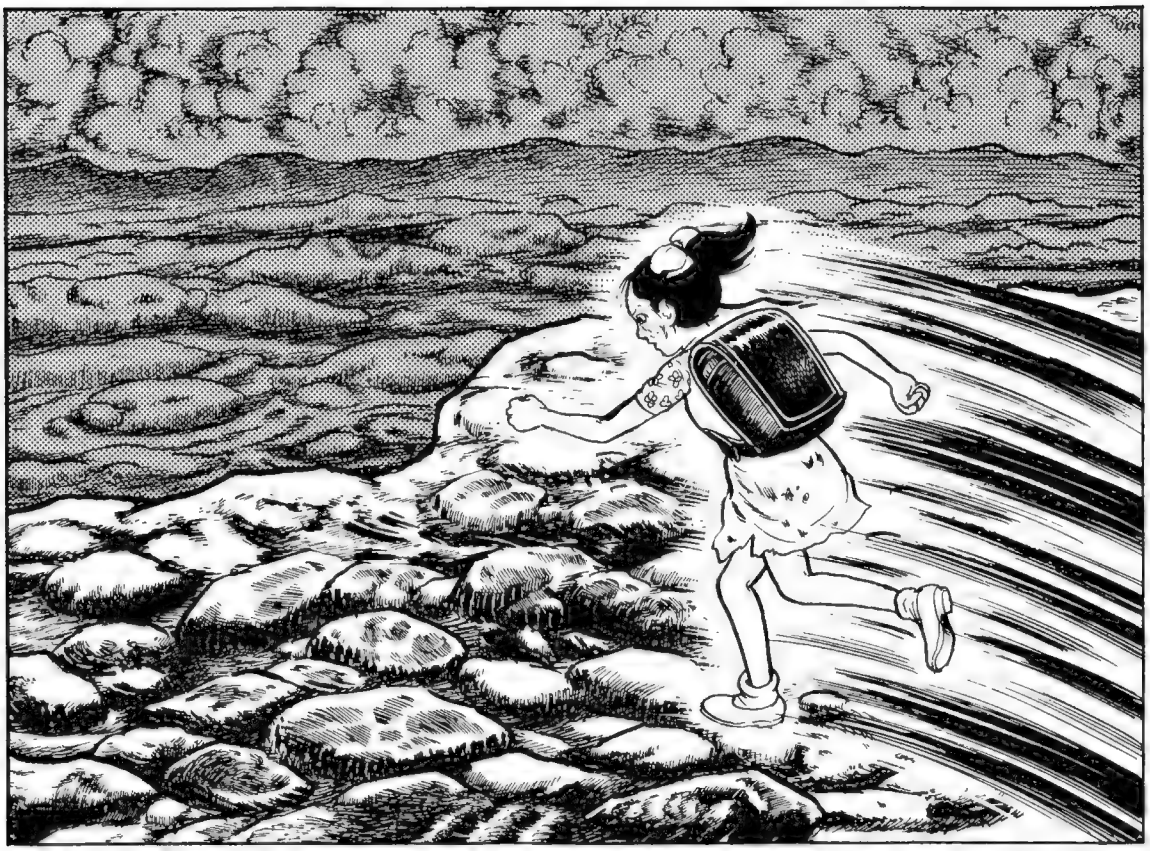
EVEN A CHILD KNOWS YOU CAN'T SURVIVE WHEN HALF YOUR HEAD'S MISSING!
SO TELL ME! WHY DON'T YOU TRY TOUCHING IT!
MY ARM'S NOT GONE! IT'S JUST NOT HERE!
HA HA HA HA!
ULGGH ...!
AGGGH !
HELP MEEE! OH, HERE COMES A GIRL! HEY!
I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY!
THEY'RE IN THE DESERT! HALF MY FACE AND MY ARM ARE IN THE DESERT!

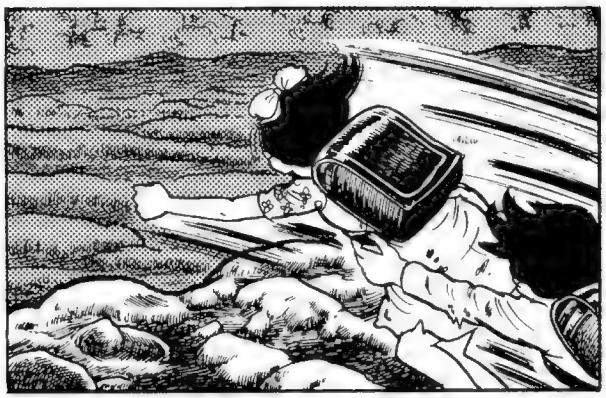
SAKI!



IT'S ME!

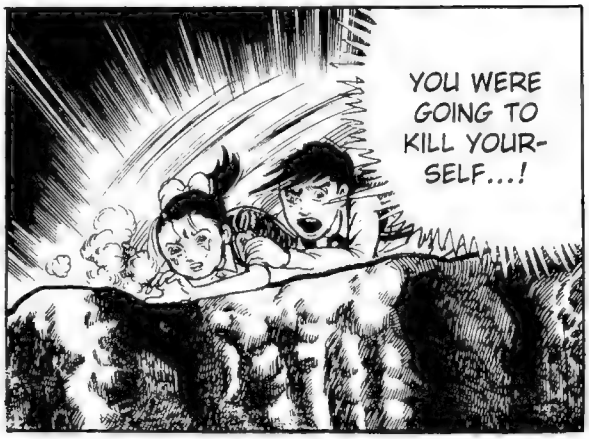
WAIT!





DON'T!

LET GO OF ME!


YOU WERE GOING TO KILL YOUR-SELF...!

YOU USED TO GO THERE ALONE A LOT BEFORE WE CAME HERE.
YOU WERE HEADED FOR THE PARK.

I WON'T! NOT UNTIL YOU PROMISE YOU WON'T HURT YOURSELF!

AND NOW YOU'VE COME BACK HERE...

I KNOW THAT.

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU!
I...

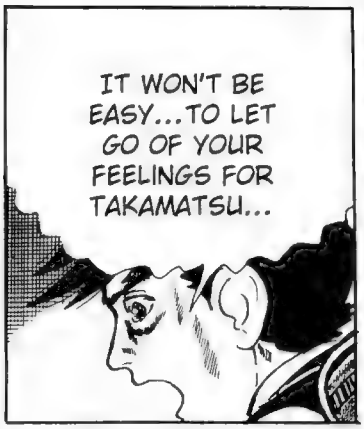
PLEASE DON'T GO, SAKI.

SOB...!

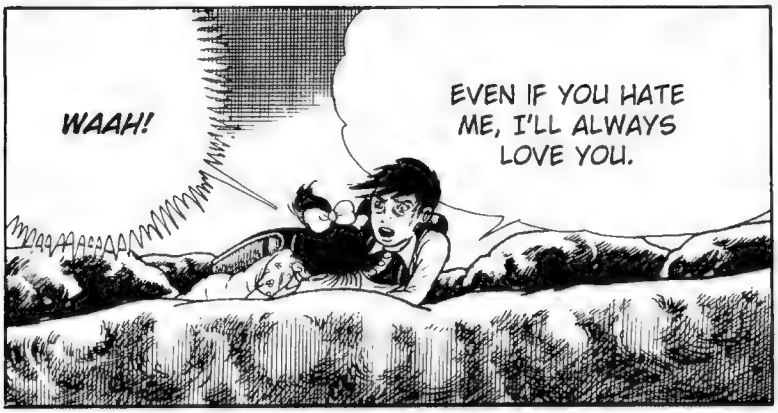
SOB... SOB!

WHAT?!

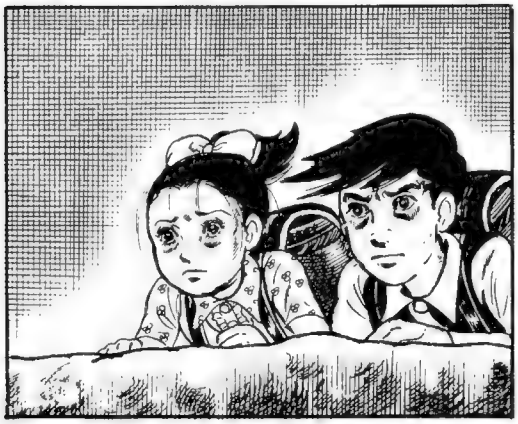
YOU MAY NOT EVEN LIKE ME, BUT...


IT WON'T BE EASY...TO LET GO OF YOUR FEELINGS FOR TAKAMATSU...

I'LL ALWAYS STAND BY YOUR SIDE!


WAAH!
EVEN IF YOU HATE ME, I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.

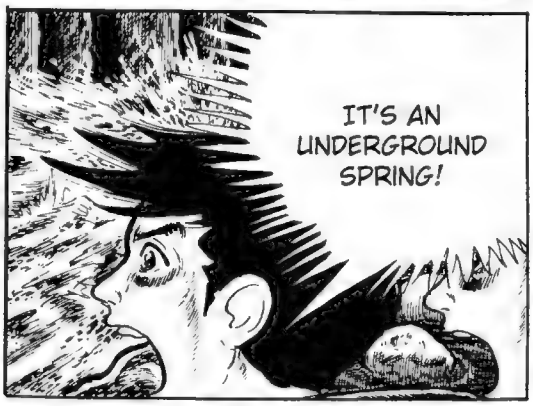
...I THINK YOU'RE AMAZING.



...IF YOU WANT TO STAY, I'LL STAY HERE WITH YOU.
BUT...
THE WHOLE WORLD HAS CHANGED.
NO...IT'S COMING FROM THIS WAY...
NOT ANOTHER EARTH-QUAKE...?
DID YOU HEAR THAT NOISE?
HUH...?
SHAA
IT'S OVER BY THE FISSURE!
SHAA
SHAAA
OH!

SHAAAAA
WATER!

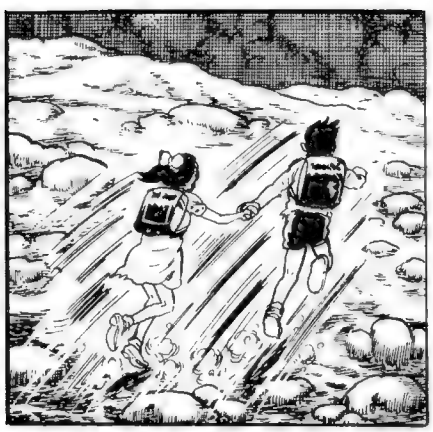
IT MUST HAVE BEEN RELEASED BY THE VOLCANO ERUPTING!


IT'S AN UNDERGROUND SPRING!

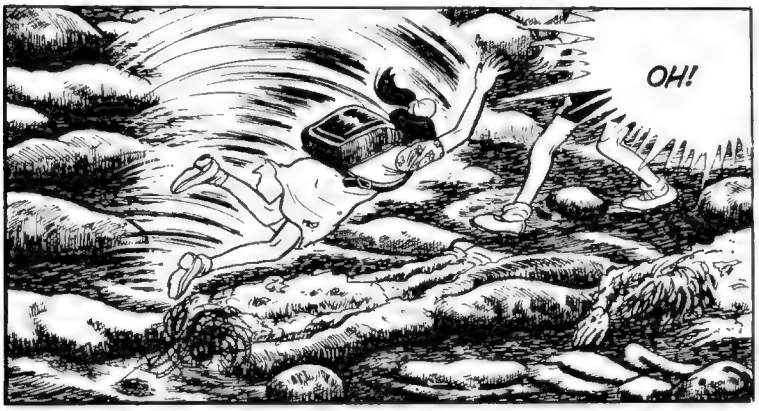
FRESH AIR! THE WIND'S PICKING UP!

WOW!

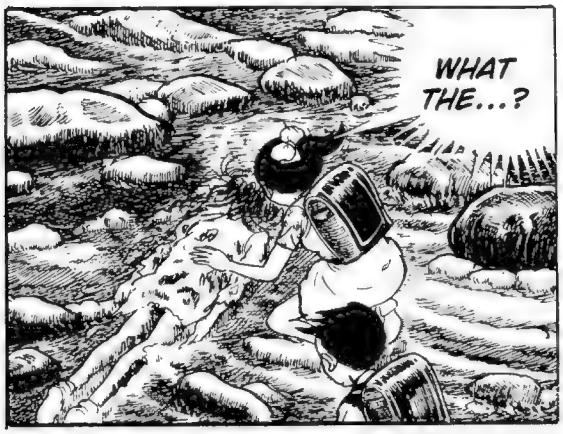
DO YOU FEEL THAT? IT'S A BREEZE!



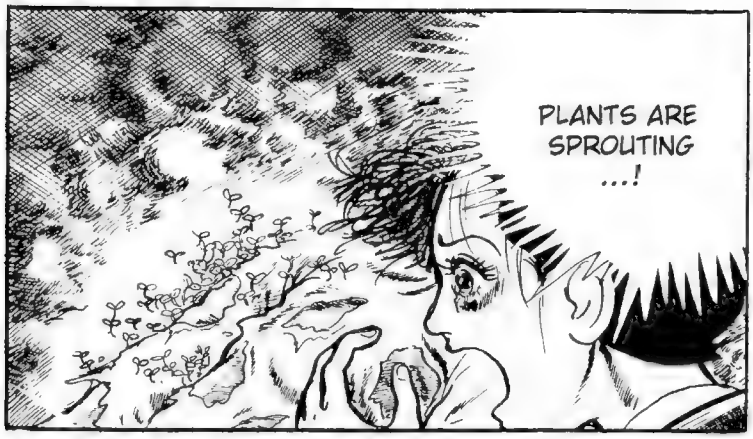
OKAY!
WE HAVE TO TELL EVERYONE!


OH!

POOR GIRL. WE SHOULD GIVE HER A REAL BURIAL.

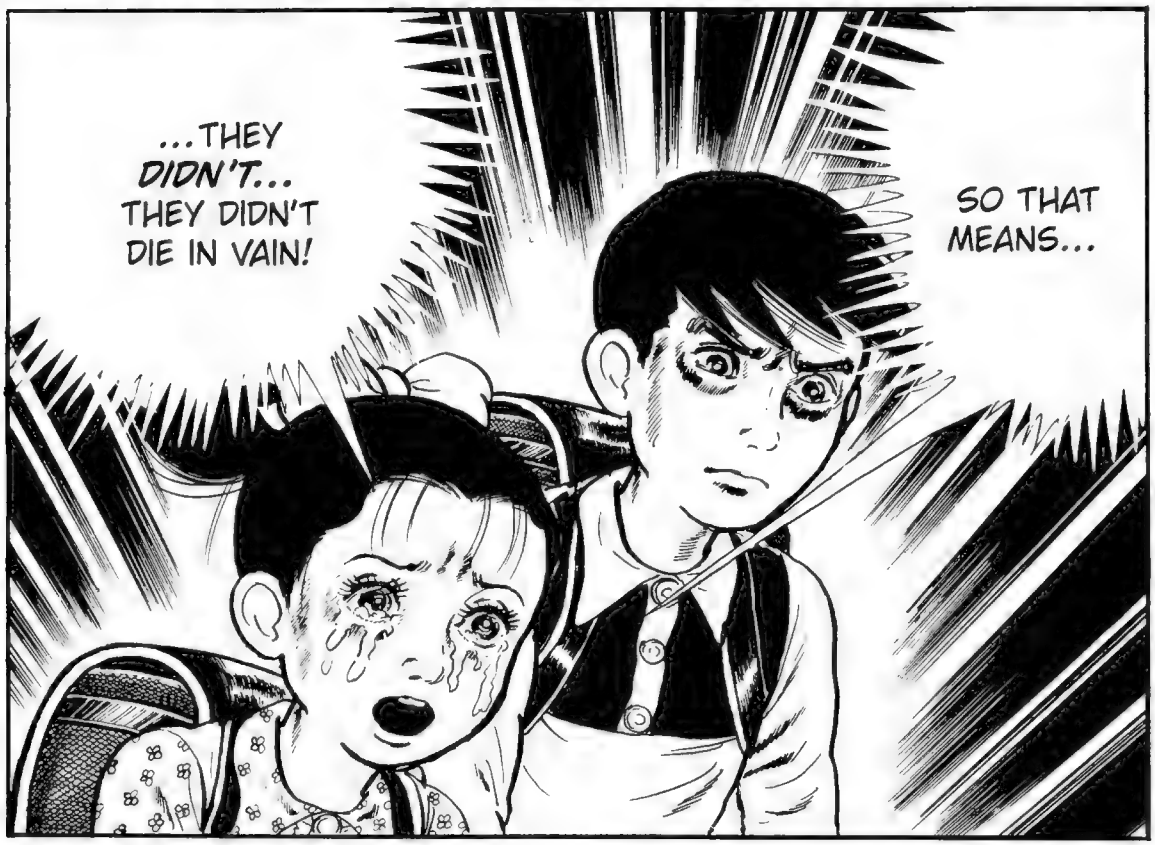

WHAT THE...?

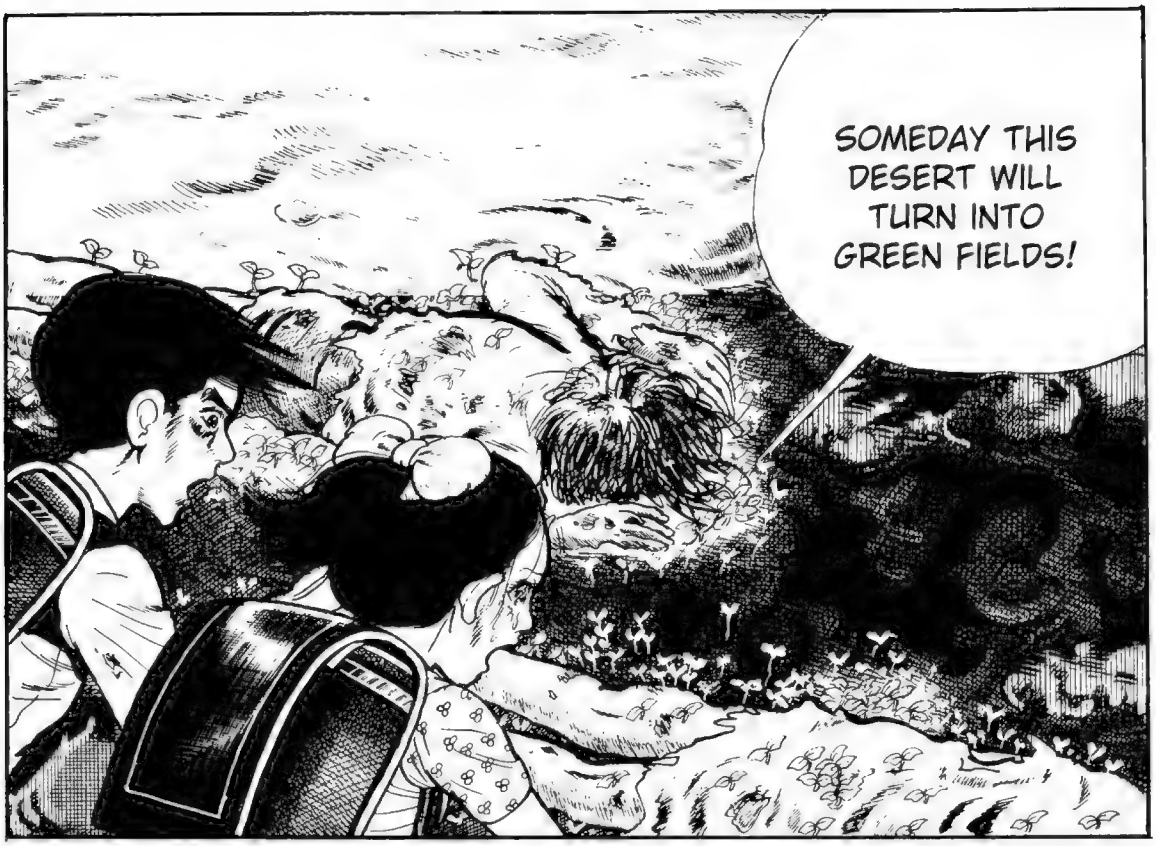
IT'S TH-THE BODY OF SOMEONE FROM OUR SCHOOL!
AIEEE!


PLANTS ARE SPROUTING ...!

LOOK, OVER HERE TOO!

THEY'RE FROM THOSE SEEDS WE DIVIDED UP BETWEEN US!

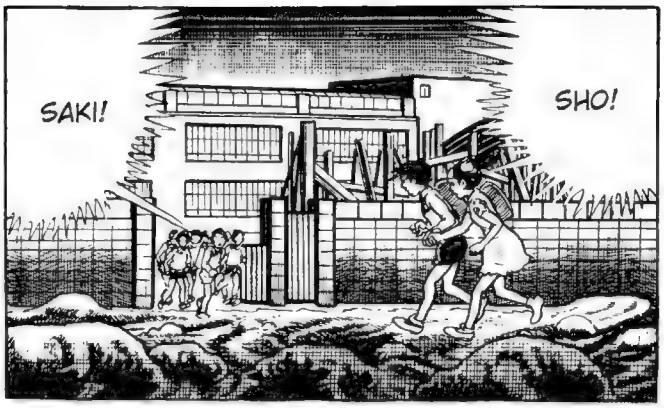

...THEY DIDN'T... THEY DIDN'T DIE IN VAIN!
SO THAT MEANS...


SOMEDAY THIS DESERT WILL TURN INTO GREEN FIELDS!

BE STRONG AND GROW.

OKAY!
COME ON, WE SHOULD GET BACK!

YOU'RE BACK!


SAKI!
SHO!

WHAT?!
LISTEN! WE FOUND WATER!

YEAH! THE CHASM'S ROARING WITH WATER! IT'S TURNED INTO A RIVER!

R-REALLY?!

I BET THEY'RE ALL SPROUTING!
ON TOP OF THAT, THERE ARE PLANTS SPROUTING IN THE DESERT! ON THE BODIES OF THE PEOPLE WHO DIED!

WOW!

THIS PLACE WILL BE GREEN SOMEDAY!

THE BEANS AND CUCUMBERS IN OUR GARDEN ARE GROWING TOO!

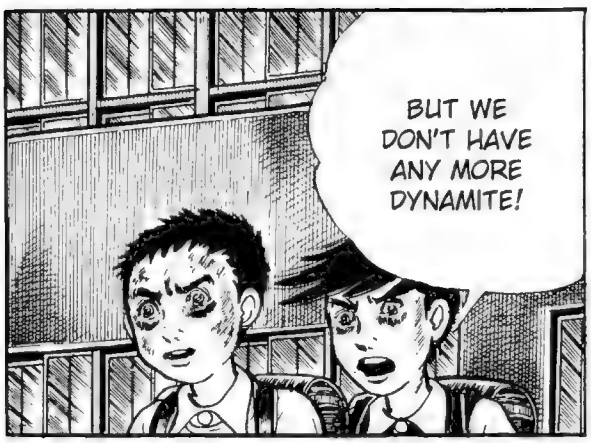
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH GOOD NEWS!

WOWW!

WHAT?

TAKAMATSU ...THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM...

YU WON'T BUDGE. HE SAYS HE WANTS TO GO HOME.


BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE DYNAMITE!

WE HAVE TO TRY AGAIN!

WE'LL WAIT FOR THE NEXT ERUPTION!

WE'LL USE THE FORCE FROM THE VOLCANO!

SAKI!
SHO!

YU!

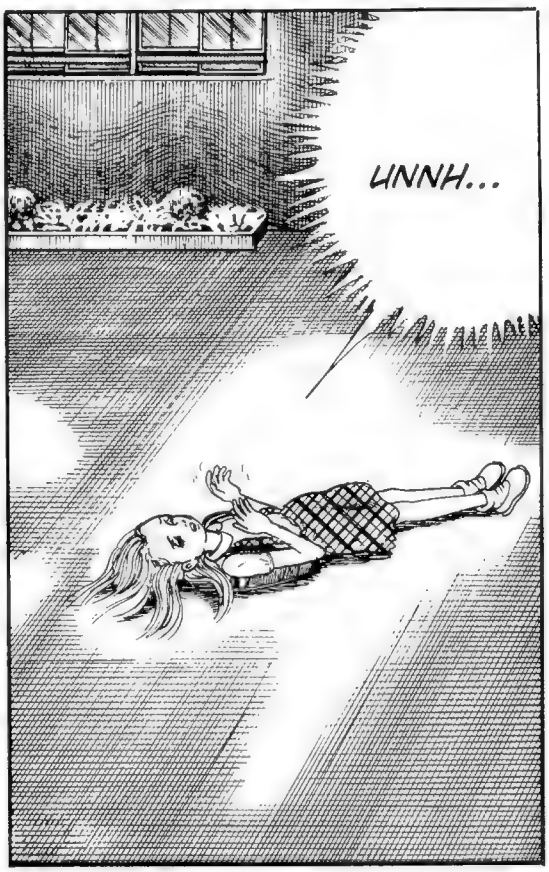
LET'S GO NOW!
I WANNA GO HOME SOON!

TH-THIS TIME WE'LL MAKE IT BACK!

DON'T WORRY, YU!

WE HAVE TO BE READY WHEN THE NEXT ERUPTION COMES!
COME ON, EVERYONE! FORM A CIRCLE!

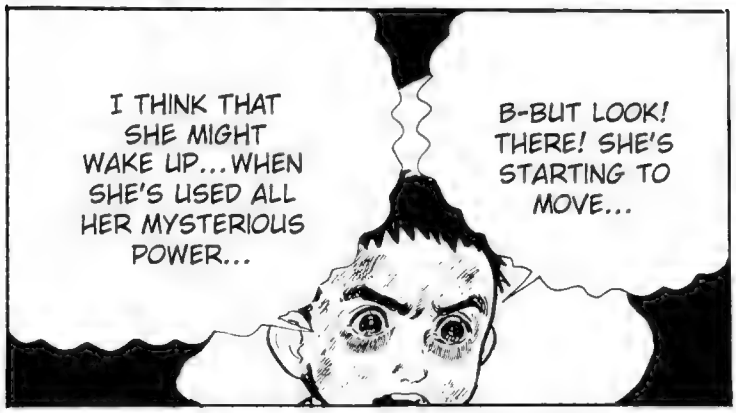
NNH...


UNNH...

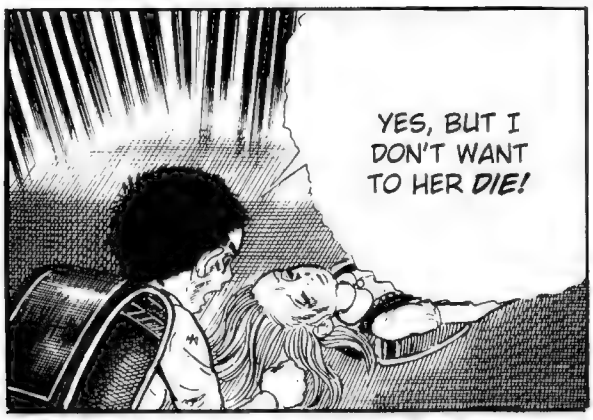
SHE'S SO WORN OUT ALREADY... IF SHE TRIES ONE MORE TIME...
I'M WORRIED ABOUT NISHI!

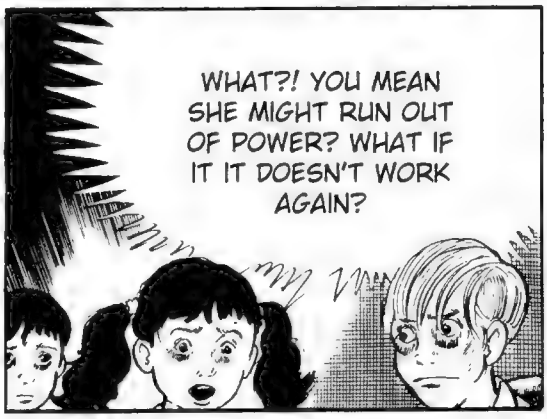
GULP
Y-YES...

...IT MIGHT KILL HER...


I THINK THAT SHE MIGHT WAKE UP...WHEN SHE'S USED ALL HER MYSTERIOUS POWER...
B-BUT LOOK! THERE! SHE'S STARTING TO MOVE...

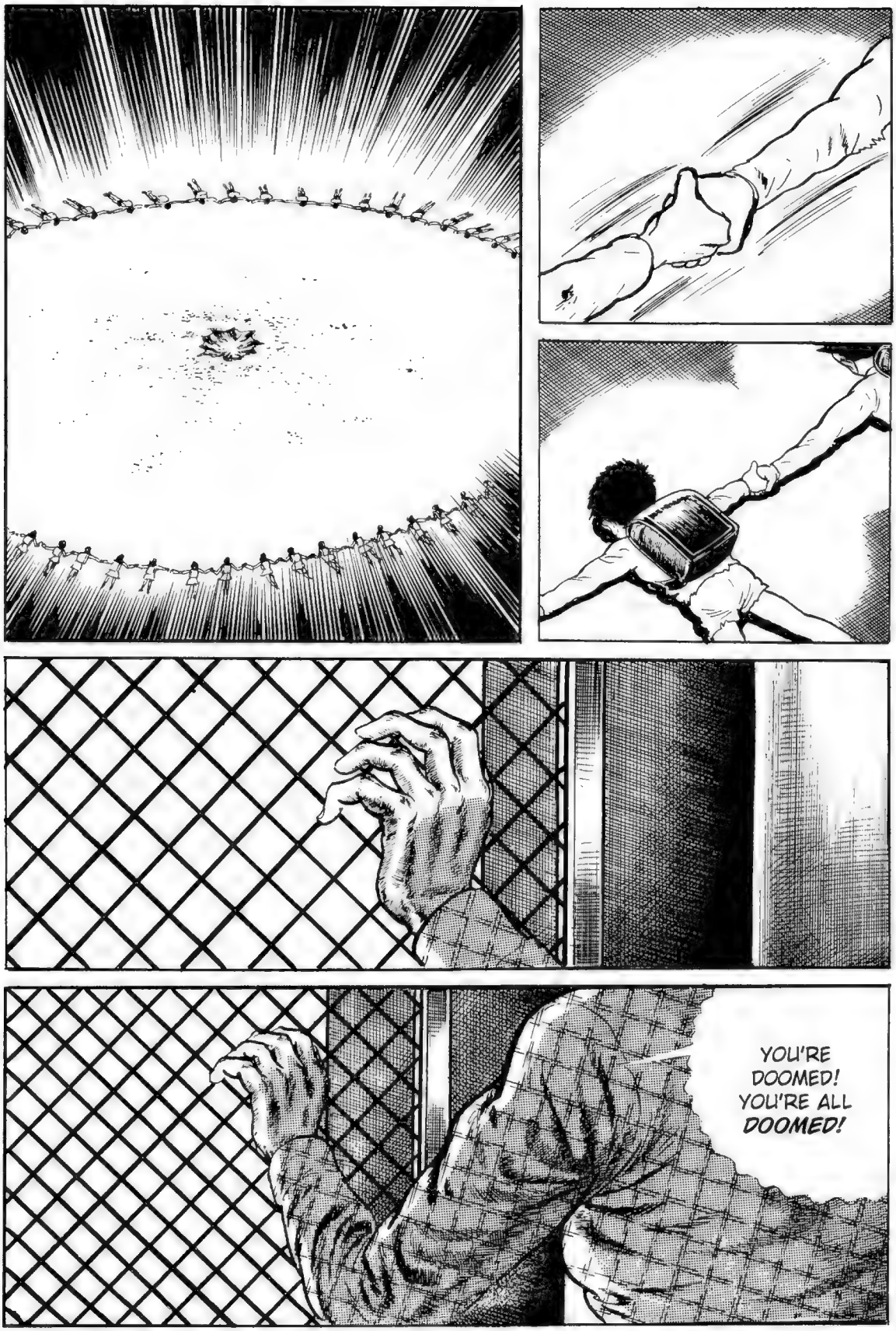
NNH...

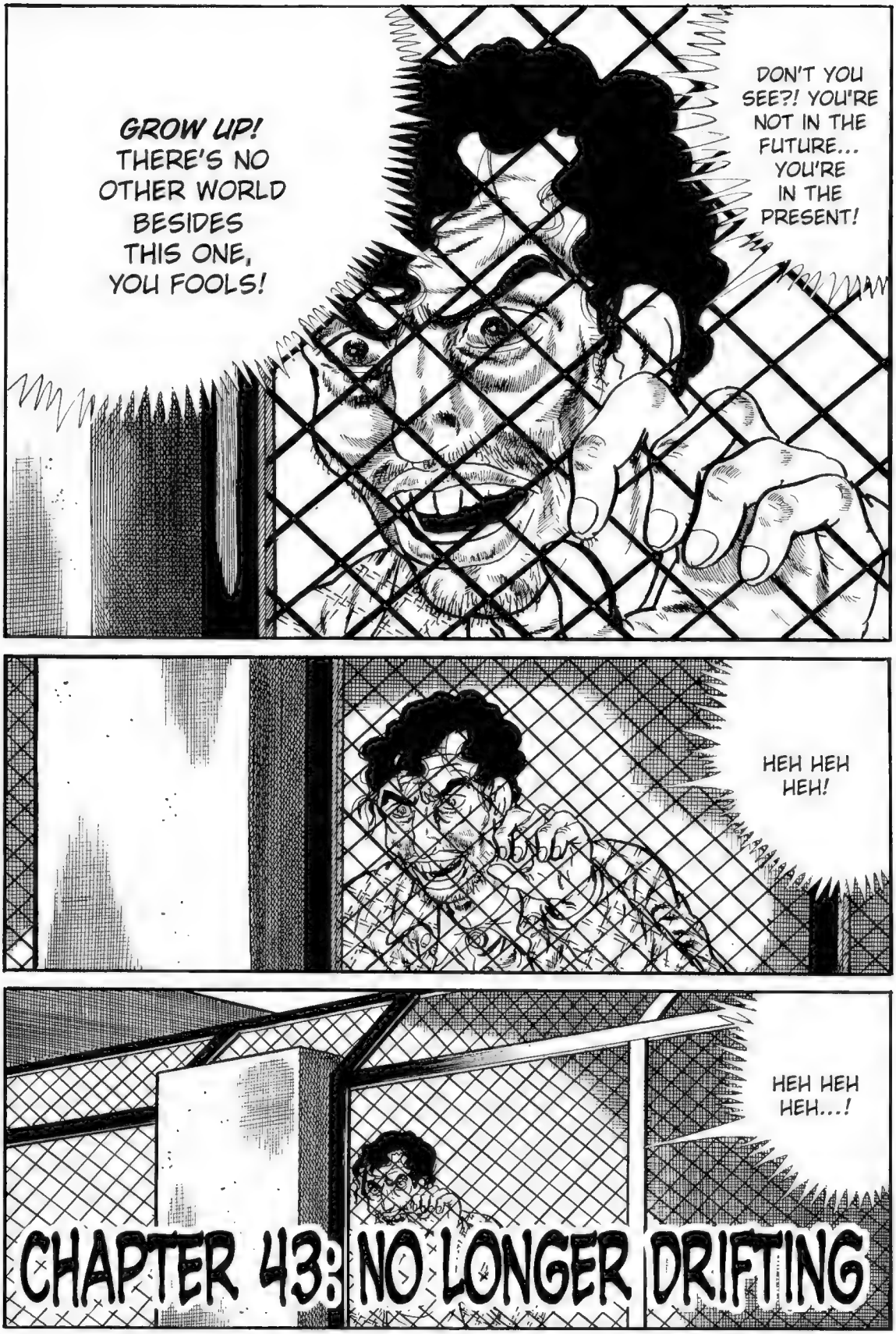

YES, BUT I DON'T WANT TO HER *DIE!*


WHAT?! YOU MEAN SHE MIGHT RUN OUT OF POWER? WHAT IF IT IT DOESN'T WORK AGAIN?

OKAY!
NEVER MIND THAT! COME ON, LET'S GET READY!

BUT IF SHE RUNS OUT, WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO US?


YOU'RE DOOMED! YOU'RE ALL DOOMED!


GROW UP! THERE'S NO OTHER WORLD BESIDES THIS ONE, YOU FOOLS!
DON'T YOU SEE?! YOU'RE NOT IN THE FUTURE... YOU'RE IN THE PRESENT!
HEH HEH HEH!
HEH HEH HEH...!
CHAPTER 43: NO LONGER DRIFTING

R-R-R-
R-R-R-
NOW!
KA BOOM
RMM--
R-R-R-
I-IT DIDN'T WORK AGAIN!
UNNH...
B-BUT WHY?

SH-SHE'S AWAKE!
GOOD! SHE'S ALL RIGHT...SHE PASSED OUT AGAIN...
LISTEN UP, EVERYONE. I DON'T THINK WE CAN GET BACK TO OUR WORLD AGAIN!

YES! THAT'S RIGHT!
YOU'RE SAYING TO GIVE UP?!
WAIT! LISTEN TO ME!
ANGGH ...!
...FOR A BIGGER PURPOSE!
MAYBE WE'RE HERE...
I MEAN...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

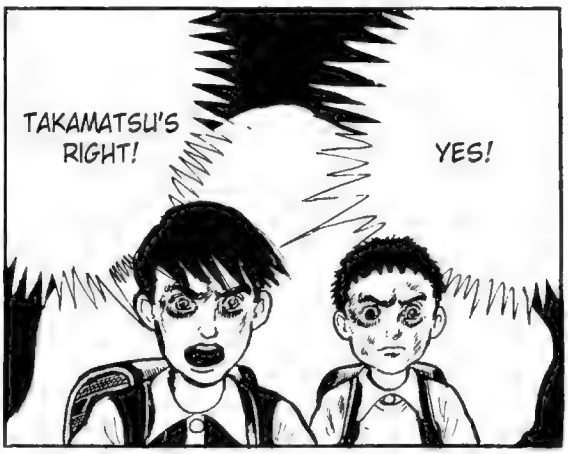
WHAT?!
...MAYBE WE WERE *CHOSEN* TO DO THIS!

AND WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT!

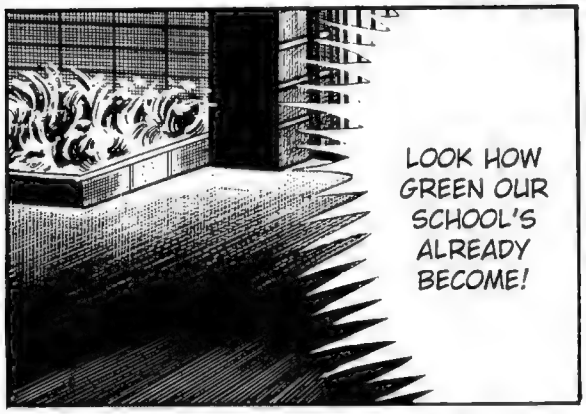
FOR WHATEVER REASON, OUR WORLD'S BEEN DESTROYED!

WHAT IF WE WERE SENT HERE TO SOW THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE?

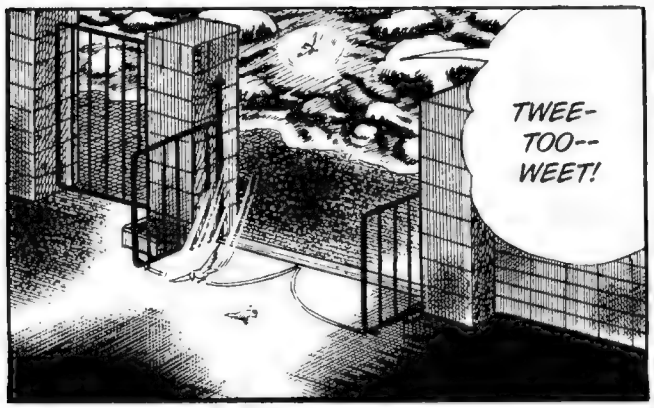
WE *ARE* THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE!

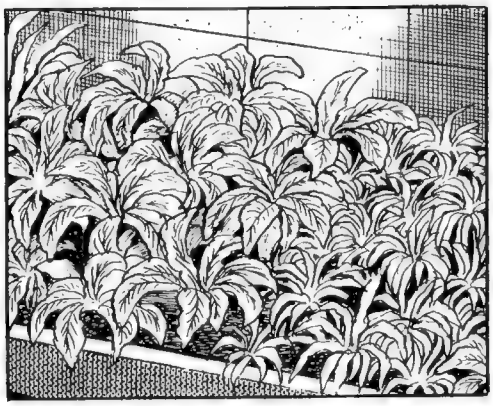

TAKAMATSU'S RIGHT!
YES!

EVEN WITH OUR FIGHTING AND PROBLEMS, LOOK HOW MUCH WE'VE MANAGED TO CHANGE IT IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME!
FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THIS IS OUR WORLD!


LOOK HOW GREEN OUR SCHOOL'S ALREADY BECOME!

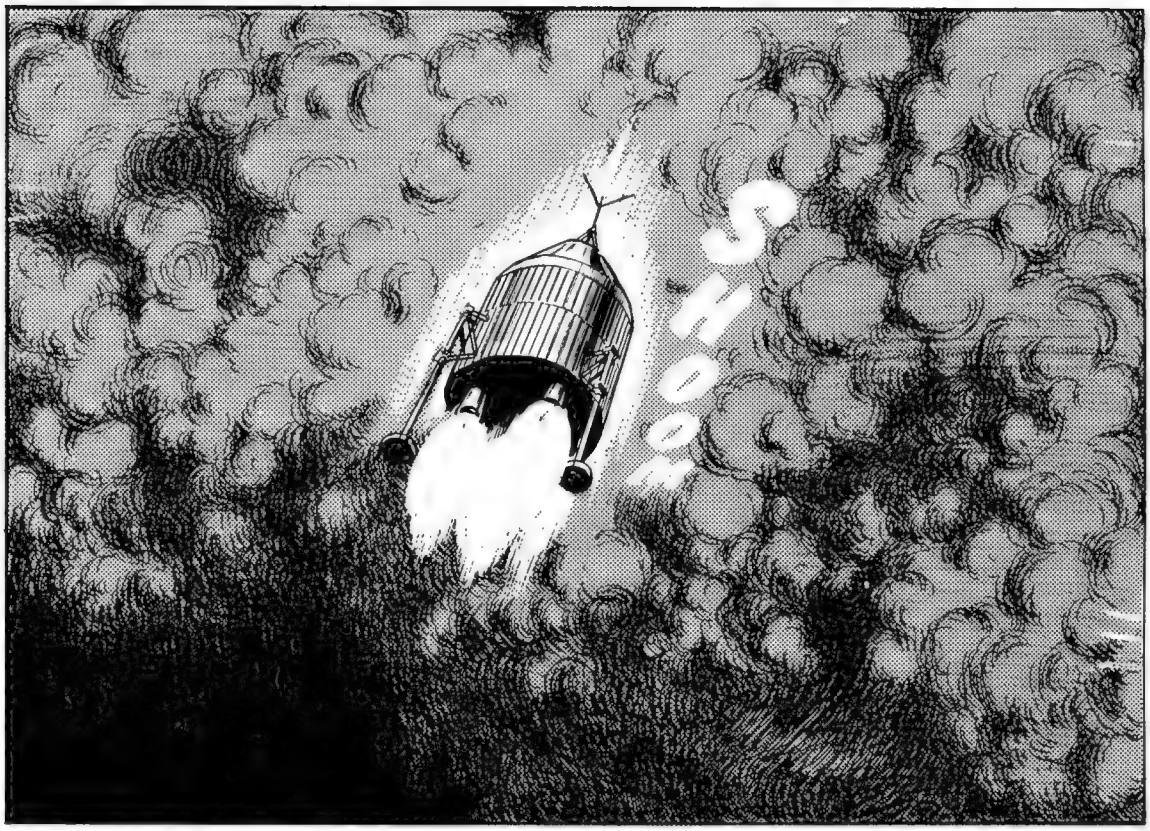
IMAGINE WHAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF DOING IF WE ACTUALLY COMMIT OURSELVES!

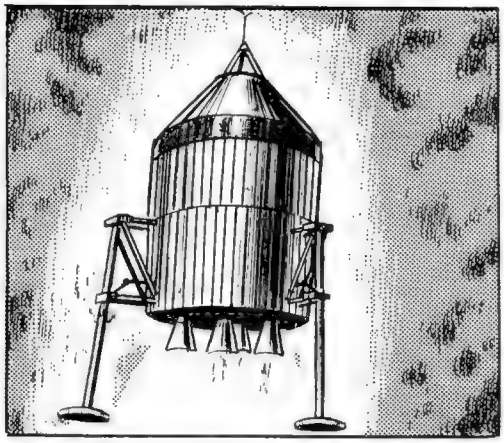

TWEE-TOO--WEET!



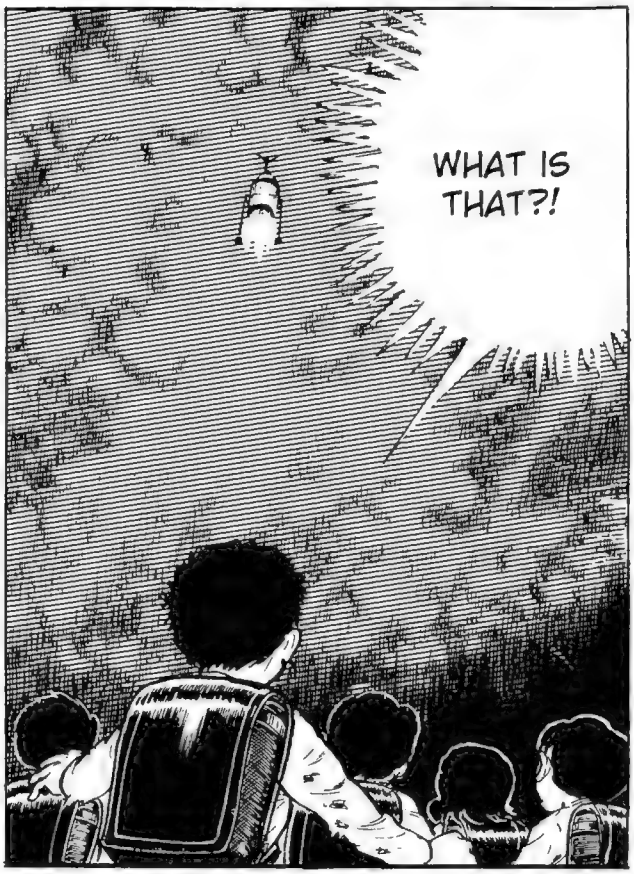
OH!

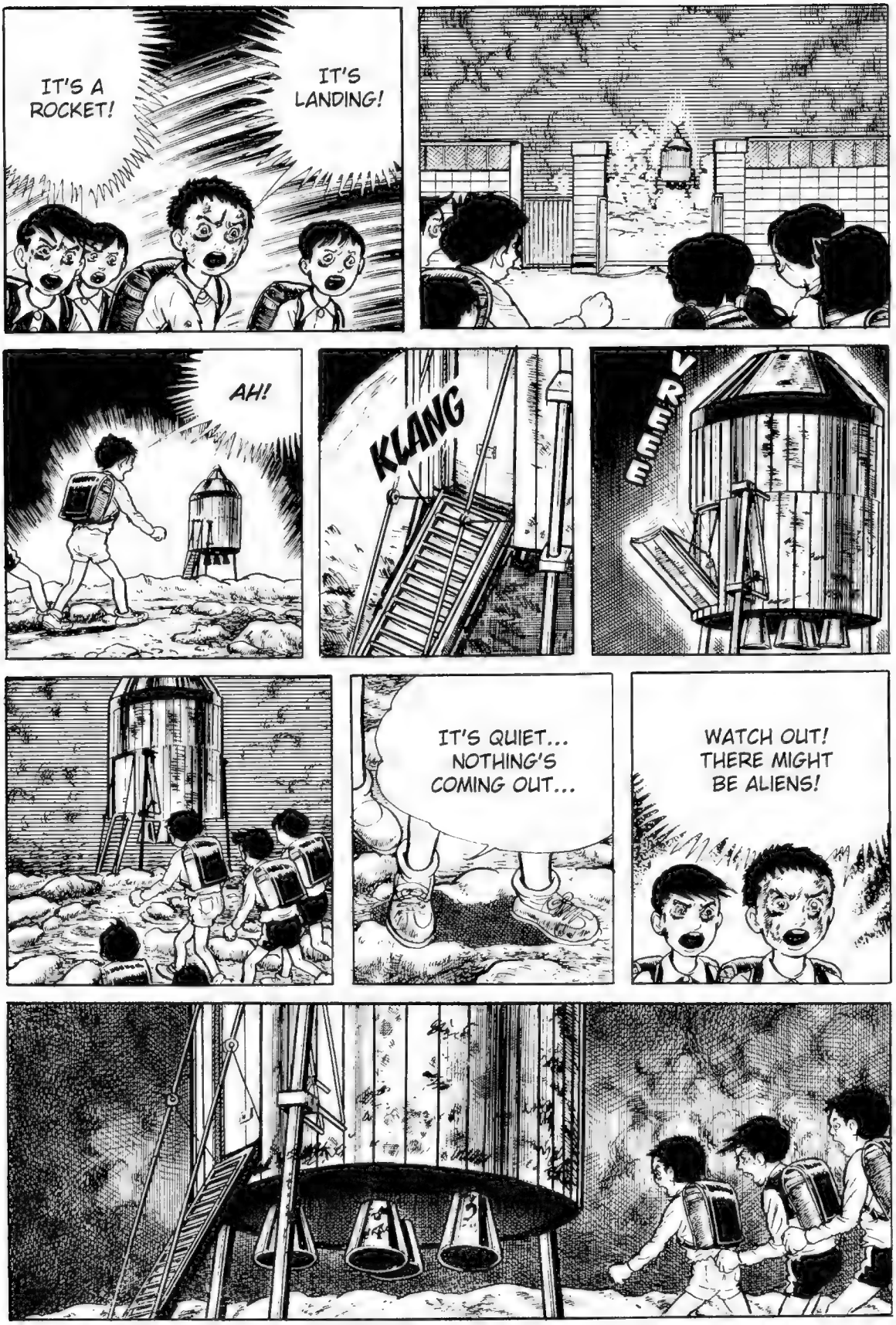
OUR BIRDS ARE COMING BACK!

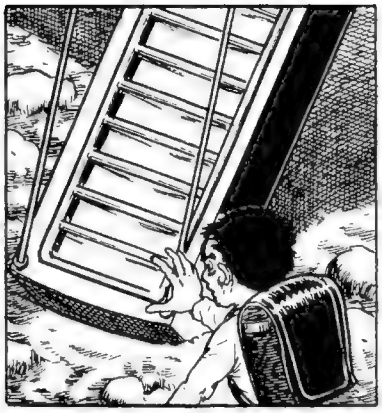

SHOOM

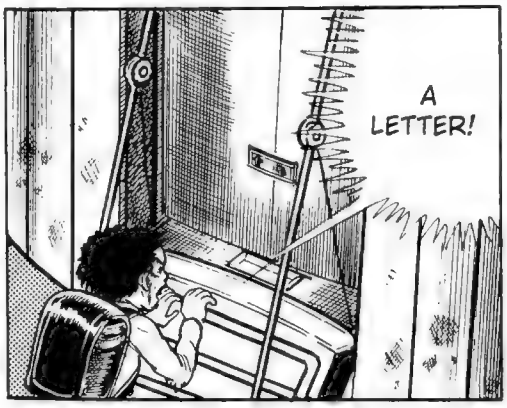


IT'S COMING TOWARDS US!


WHAT IS THAT?!


IT'S A ROCKET!
IT'S LANDING!
AH!
KLANG
VREEE
IT'S QUIET... NOTHING'S COMING OUT...
WATCH OUT! THERE MIGHT BE ALIENS!



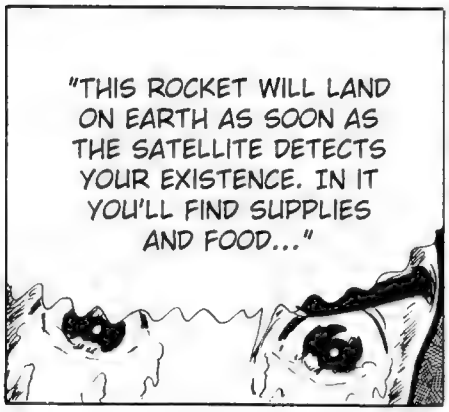
"TO SHO TAKAMATSU ..."
高松翔さま

A LETTER!

WH-WHAT?!

IT'S FROM MY MOTHER!

HUH?!

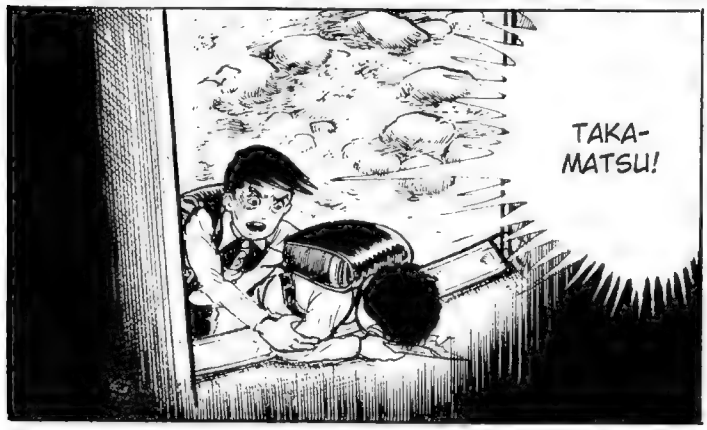
IT'S IN HER HAND-WRITING!

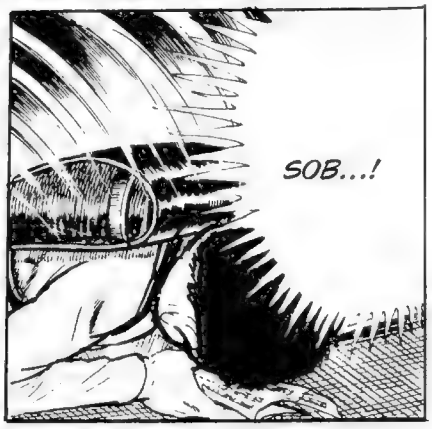

"THIS ROCKET WILL LAND ON EARTH AS SOON AS THE SATELLITE DETECTS YOUR EXISTENCE. IN IT YOU'LL FIND SUPPLIES AND FOOD..."

SNIF ...!

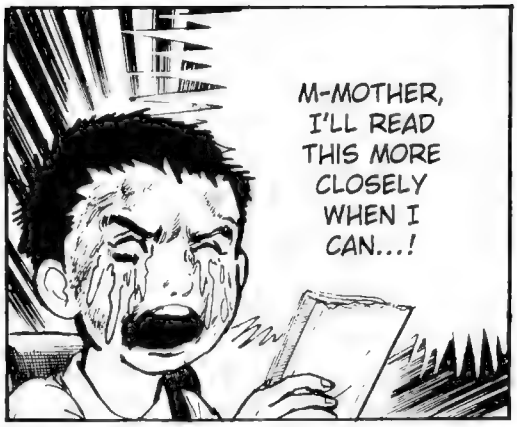
"DEAR SHO...ARE YOU WELL?"

"BUT I'LL WRITE AS MUCH AS I CAN ON THE FRONT AND BACK OF THIS SINGLE SHEET. TH-THE FAMILIES OF YOUR CLASSMATES ARE DOING FINE..."
"I HAVE TO KEEP THIS SHORT TO MAXIMIZE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR SUPPLIES."

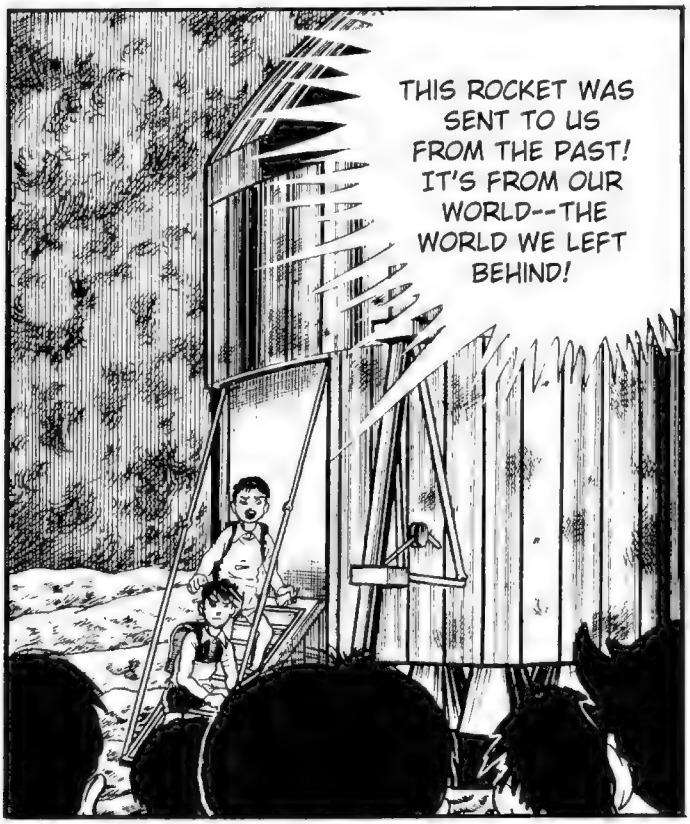

TAKA-MATSU!


SOB...!

LISTEN, EVERYONE!


M-MOTHER, I'LL READ THIS MORE CLOSELY WHEN I CAN...!

WHOA!

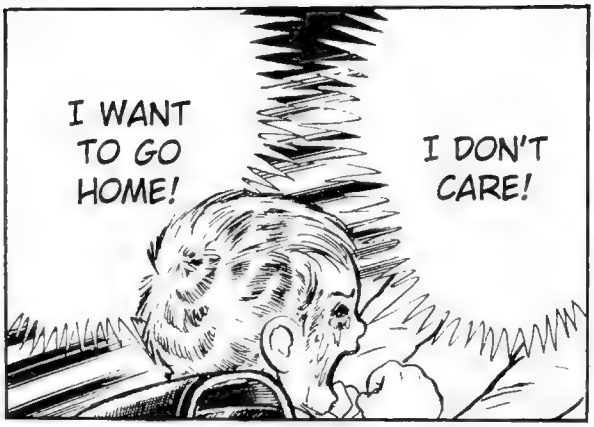

THIS ROCKET WAS SENT TO US FROM THE PAST! IT'S FROM OUR WORLD--THE WORLD WE LEFT BEHIND!

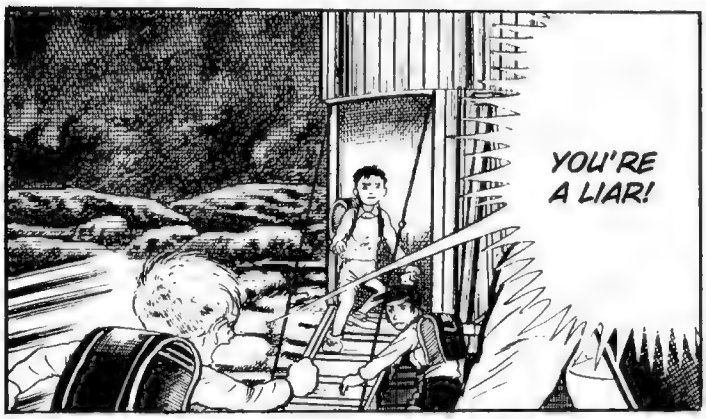
IT CONTAINS EVERYTHING WE NEED!

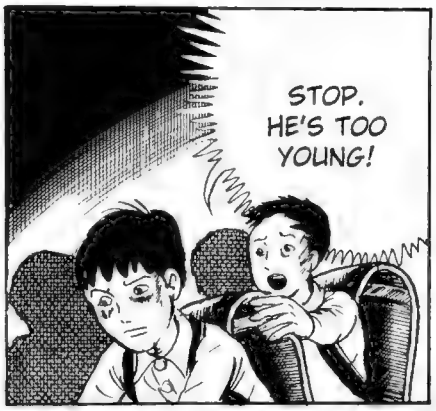
O-OKAY!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SURVIVE HERE!

I WANT TO GO BACK TO MOMMY AND DADDY!
NO!
YU!
DADDY!
MOMMY!
EVEN IF YOU GO BACK, IT WON'T HELP!
LISTEN TO ME!
YOU DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT! YOU'RE BETTER OFF HERE!
LOOK AT THIS DESERT! THIS IS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN!

BUT...!


I WANT TO GO HOME!
I DON'T CARE!

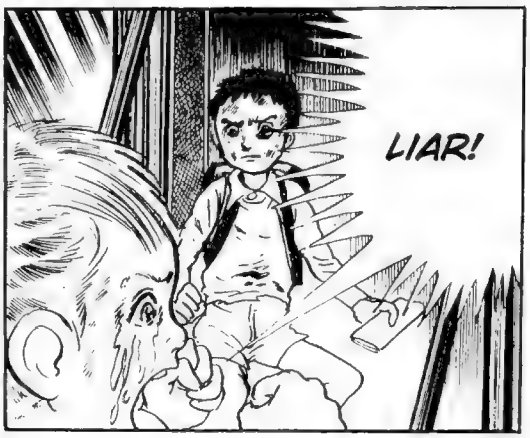

YOU'RE A LIAR!


STOP. HE'S TOO YOUNG!

WAAH...

YOU SAID I'D GO HOME!

LIAR!


LIAR!

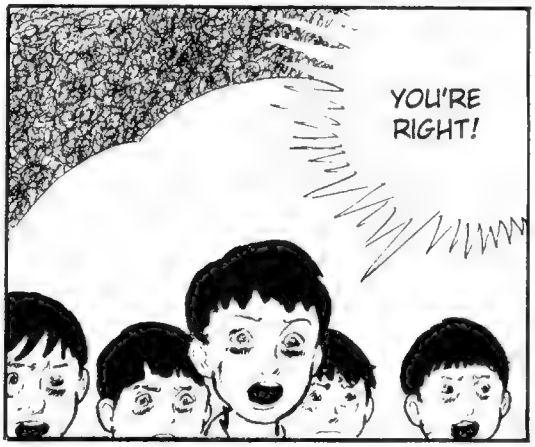
COME HERE, EVERYONE!

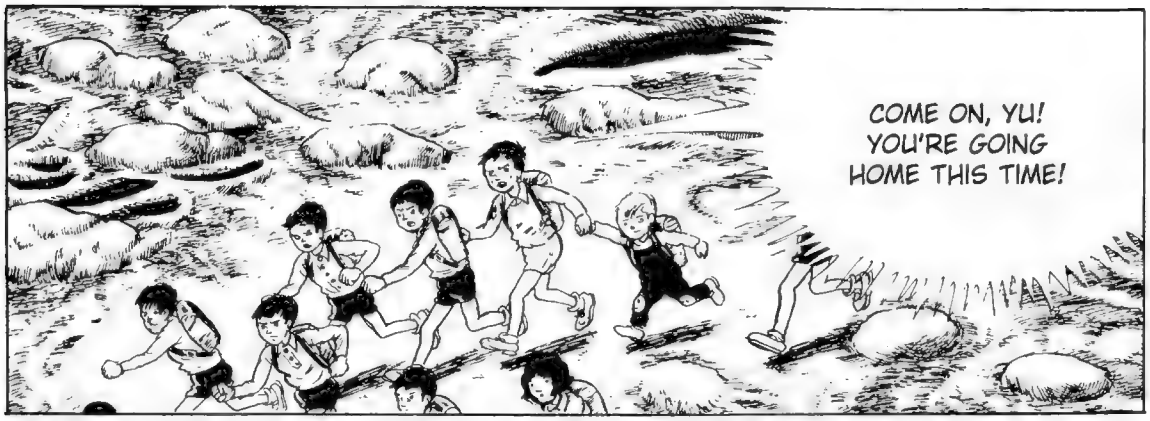
YU!

WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO SEND YU BACK!

...HE'S BETTER OFF BEING WITH HIS PARENTS!
HE'S A KID! EVEN IF SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS IN THE PAST...

YEAH!
THEN LET'S DO IT! THE WAY WE DID IT WITH THE TRICYCLE!


YOU'RE RIGHT!


COME ON, YU! YOU'RE GOING HOME THIS TIME!

GOOD! NISHI'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS!

F-FOR REAL?

YU, YOU STAND HERE IN THE MIDDLE!
COME ON, WE NEED TO FORM A CIRCLE!

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME, OKAY?
GOODBYE, YU!
THIS TIME IT WILL WORK! WE'LL MAKE SURE IT'LL WORK!
OH, THANK YOU!
I WON'T FORGET YOU, EVEN WHEN I'M WITH MY REAL MOMMY.
I WON'T!
I WON'T!
ME TOO!
DON'T FORGET US EITHER, OKAY?
I'M GOING TO STUDY REALLY HARD AND BECOME SOMEONE IMPORTANT...
I PROMISE YOU!

...SO THIS WON'T EVER HAPPEN!

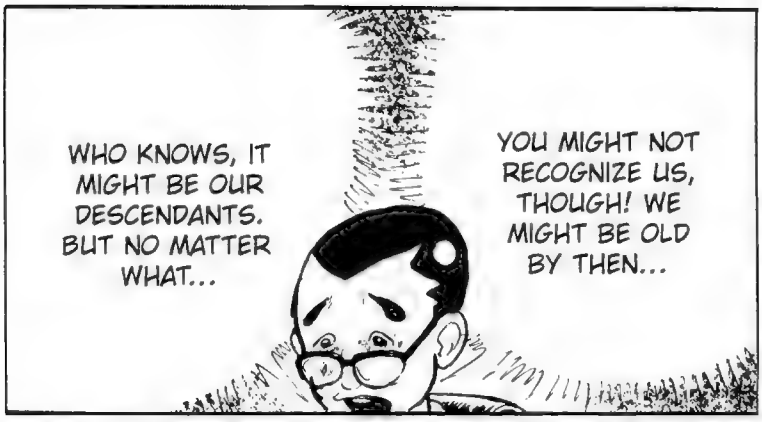
UM...AH... Y-YOU JUST MADE ME REALIZE SOME-THING EXTRA-ORDINARY!

TH-TH-THAT'S IT!

IT WOULD MEAN...
WH-WHAT WOULD IT MEAN IF YU MAKES IT BACK AND CHANGES OUR OLD WORLD?!

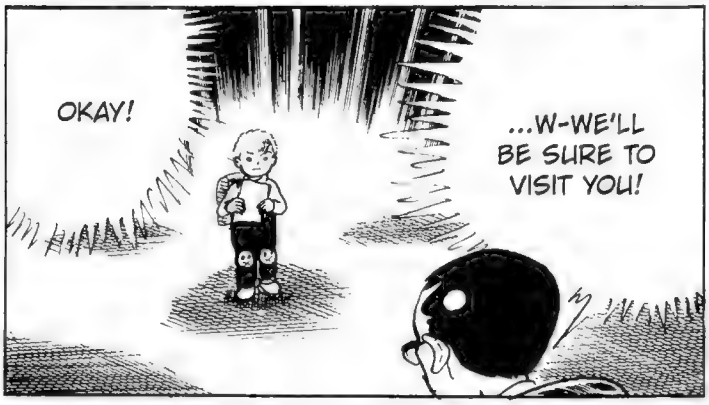
...THE MOMENT HE GOES BACK IN TIME, THIS WORLD MIGHT ALSO BE ALTERED!
Y-YOU MEAN...
O-OR PEOPLE WHO DIED MIGHT BE ALIVE!
Y-YOU MEAN THE DESERT WILL GO AWAY?
TH-THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN!
WE SHOULD ASK HIM WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE DEAD!
...IKEGAKI MIGHT COME BACK TO US?
WHO KNOWS...WE MIGHT BE TRAVELING IN OUTER SPACE LIKE A MOVIE...
ER...UH...I MEAN THE WHOLE PAST WILL CHANGE! IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE PEOPLE WILL NEVER HAVE DIED! AND WE'LL HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME OTHER COURSE!

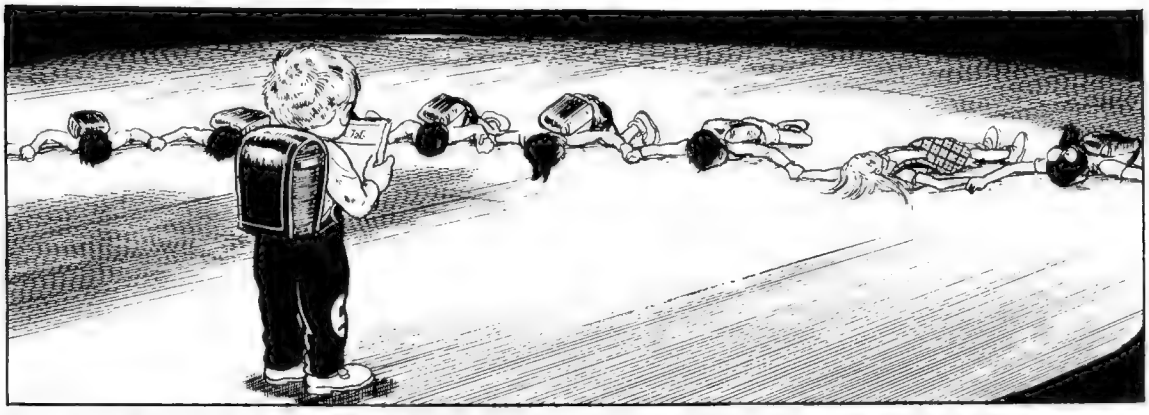
YEAH!
LET'S GET GOING! BEFORE THE TREMORS FROM THE ERUPTION STOP!
THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
WOW!
ONCE YOU GET BACK, WILL YOU GIVE THIS TO MY MOTHER?
I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
SURE!
IT'S A JOURNAL OF EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO US.
UH...AH...I'M GOING TO INVENT A TIME MACHINE SOMEDAY, AND I'LL VISIT YOU!
N-N-NOW I GET IT! WE CAME HERE BECAUSE OF THE TREMOR! IF WE CREATE A RIPPLE FASTER THAN LIGHT, WE CAN SEND YOU BACK IN TIME!
IT'S THE FIRST THING I'LL DO.

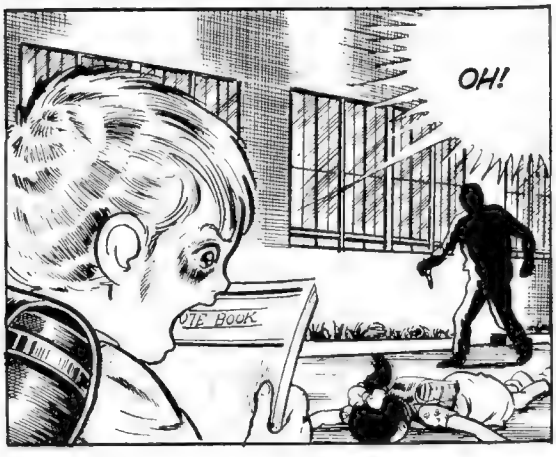

WHO KNOWS, IT MIGHT BE OUR DESCENDANTS. BUT NO MATTER WHAT...
YOU MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE US, THOUGH! WE MIGHT BE OLD BY THEN...

OOH! OKAY!

THIS IS IT!
ALL RIGHT, HERE WE GO!


OKAY!
...W-WE'LL BE SURE TO VISIT YOU!




OH!
OTE BOOK

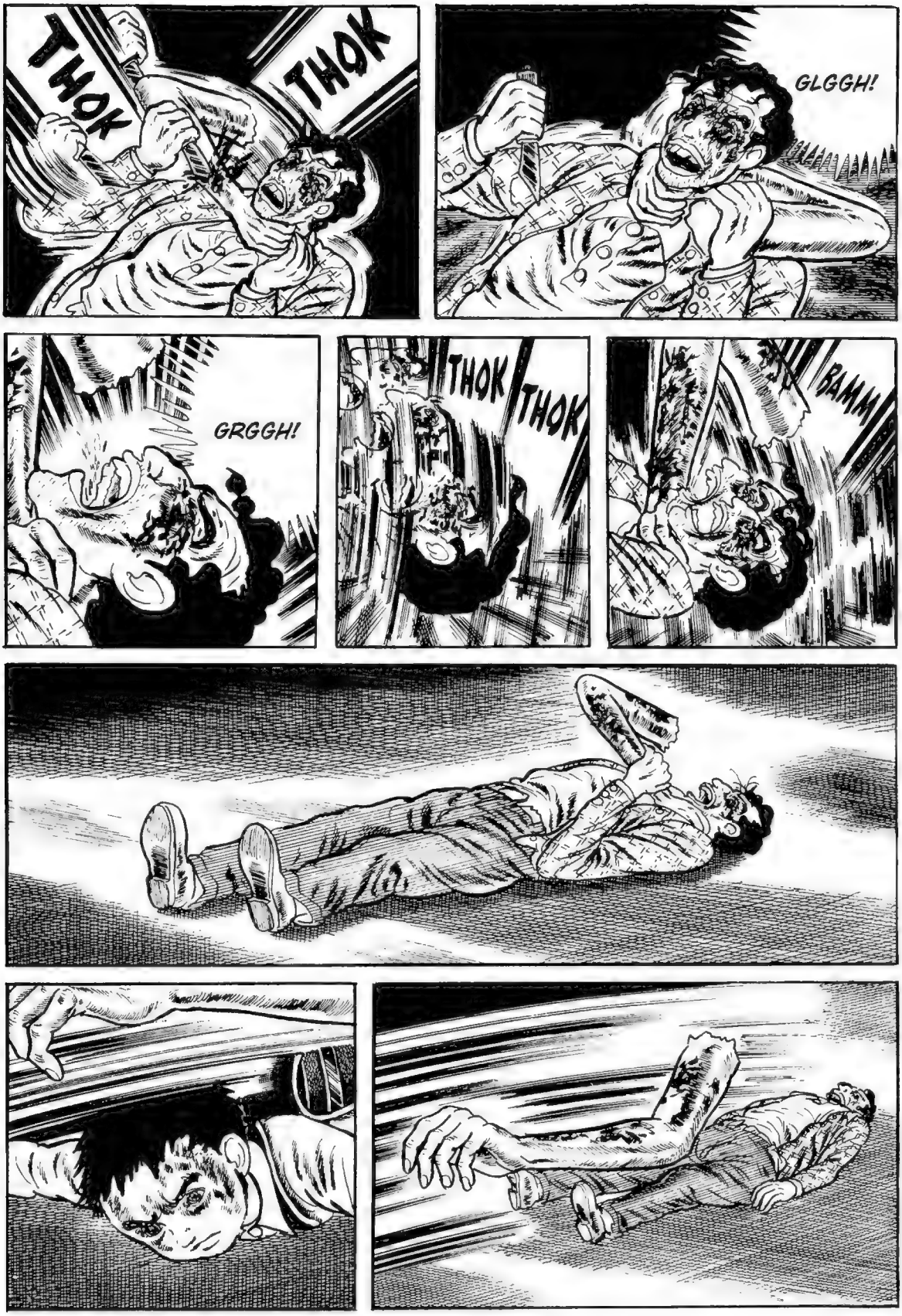
IT'S ME!
GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU SHRIMP!
I'M THE ONE WHO'S GOING HOME!
KRNK
WHUD

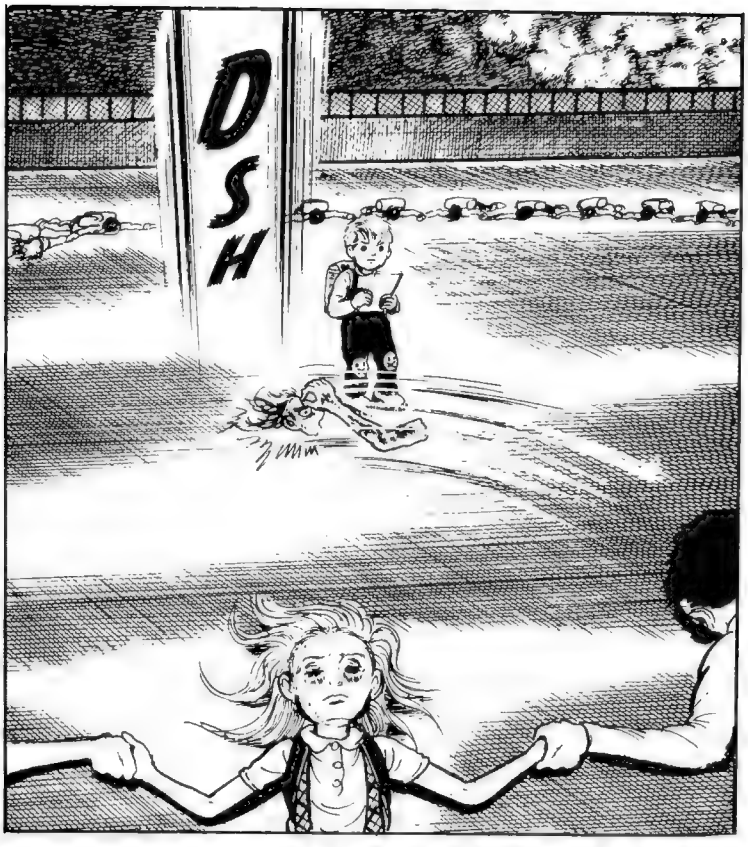
S-
S-
S-

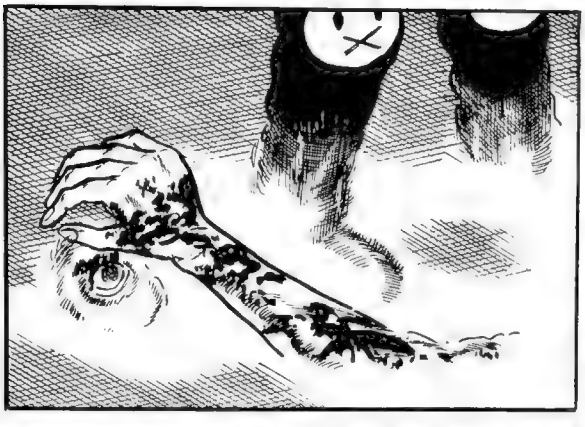
WHA
--?!

GYAAAHH!!

RRRIP
NGAAH... GGLAGGH ...!
THOK
ARRGH !


THOK
THOK
GLGGH!
GRGGH!
THOK
THOK
BAMM

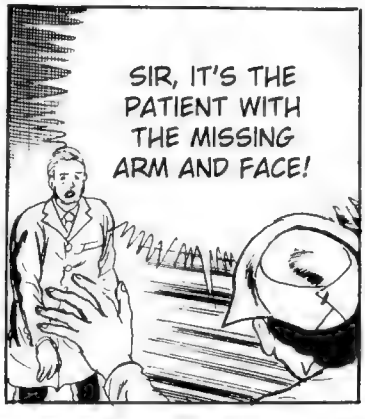

DSH



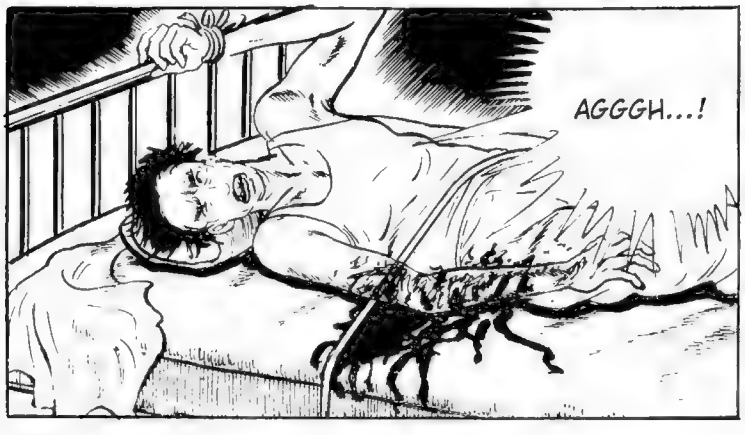
AIEEE!!

合病院
Hospital

SLAMM


SIR, IT'S THE PATIENT WITH THE MISSING ARM AND FACE!

AIEEE!


AGGGH...!

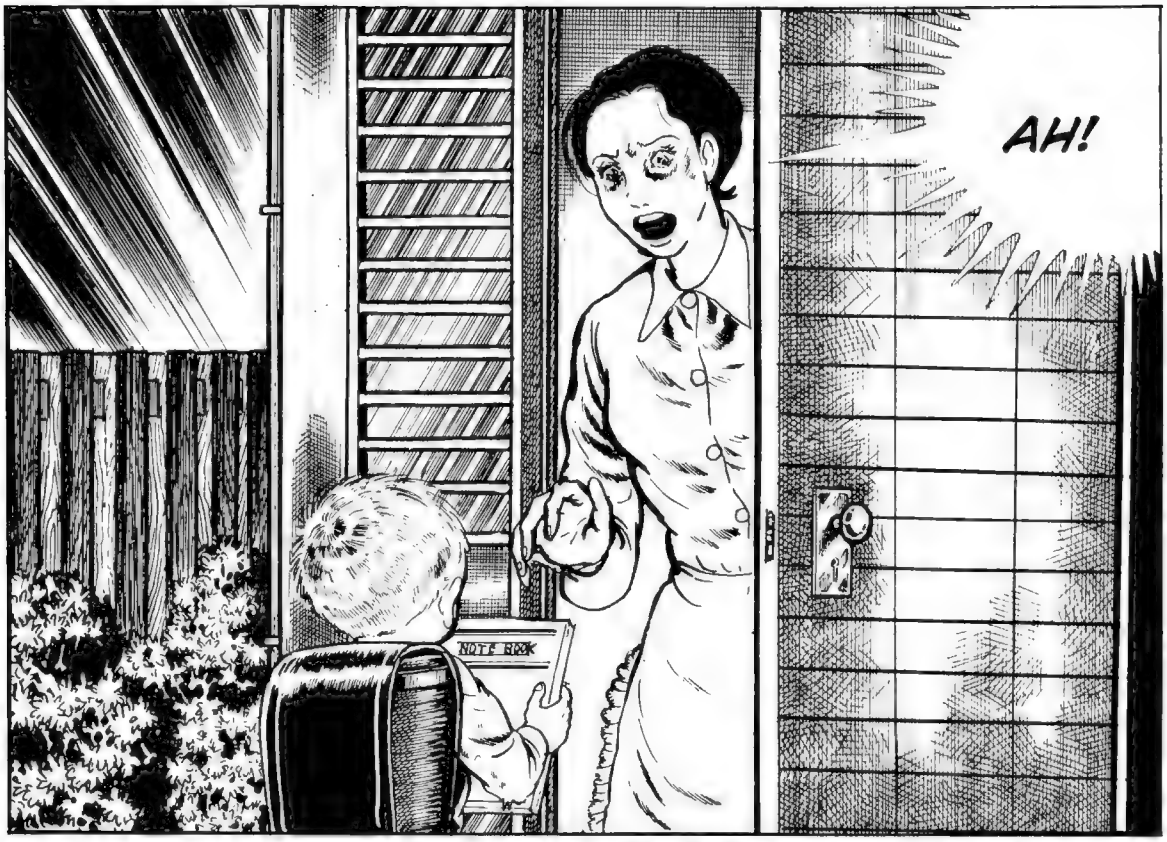
GASP!

NGGH! AGGH...!
H-HELP ME! MY ARM!
GOOD LORD...!

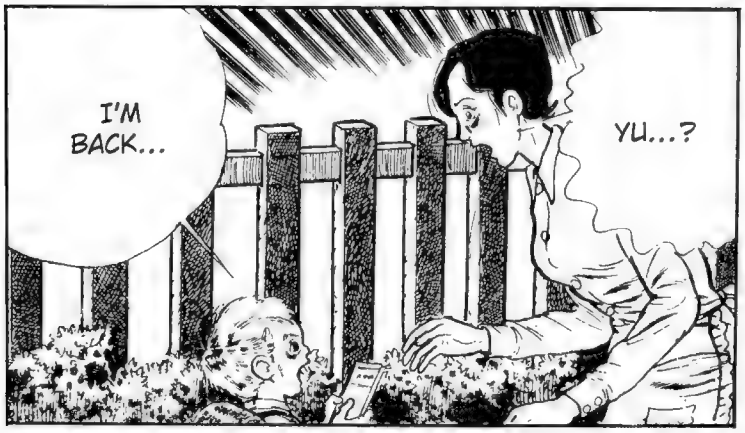
WE NEED TO TREAT HIM IMMEDIATELY!
IT HURTS!
I SNUCK INTO ONE OF THEIR BACK-PACKS!
THESE KIDS WERE IN THE FUTURE! TH-THEY WERE TRYING TO GET HOME FROM THE WASTELAND!
OH MY GOD! MY ARM'S BACK!
TH-THEN HE STABBED MY ARM WITH A KNIFE!
THIS MAN TRIED TO GET IN THEIR WAY SO I KILLED HIM!
MY FACE IS BACK TOO!

*SIGN=TAKAMATSU

*TEXT=TODAY'S MENU--SALAD


AH!
NOTE BOOK

WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?!

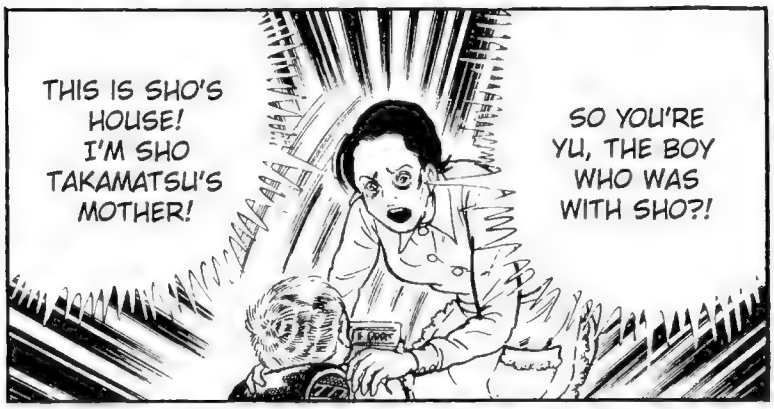

I'M BACK...
YU...?

MY NAME'S YU!

WHERE AM I?

FROM THE FUTURE...

BACK FROM WHERE?


THIS IS SHO'S HOUSE! I'M SHO TAKAMATSU'S MOTHER!
SO YOU'RE YU, THE BOY WHO WAS WITH SHO?!

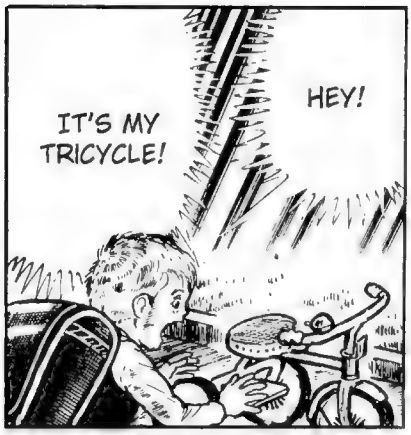
WE TRIED OVER AND OVER...BUT THE OTHERS COULDN'T MAKE IT BACK...

I CAME BACK BY MYSELF...

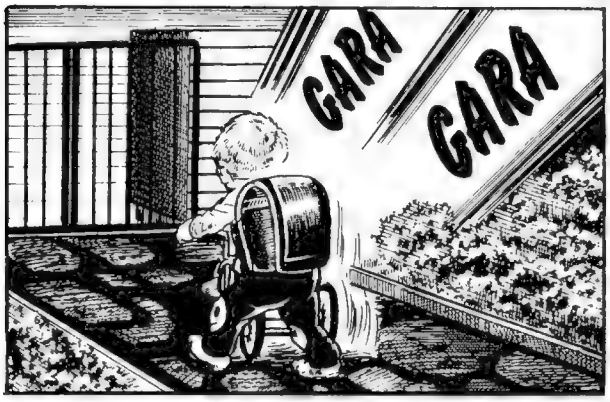
WHERE IS SHO? I-ISN'T HE WITH YOU?

TH...THAT'S SHO'S NOTE-BOOK!

SHO WANTED ME TO GIVE THIS TO YOU...


IT'S MY TRICYCLE!
HEY!

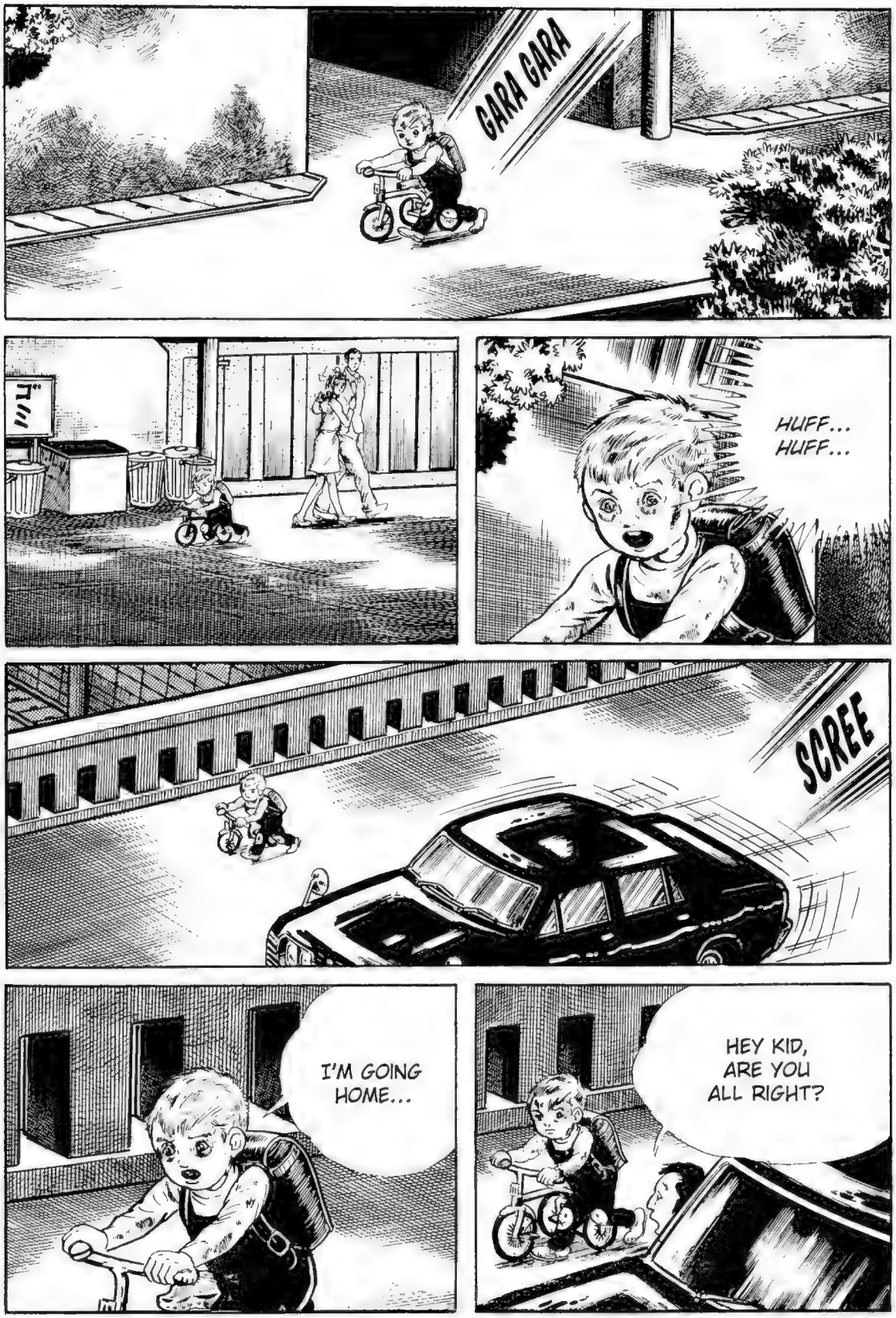
I HAVE TO GO HOME.


GARA
GARA

YAY!

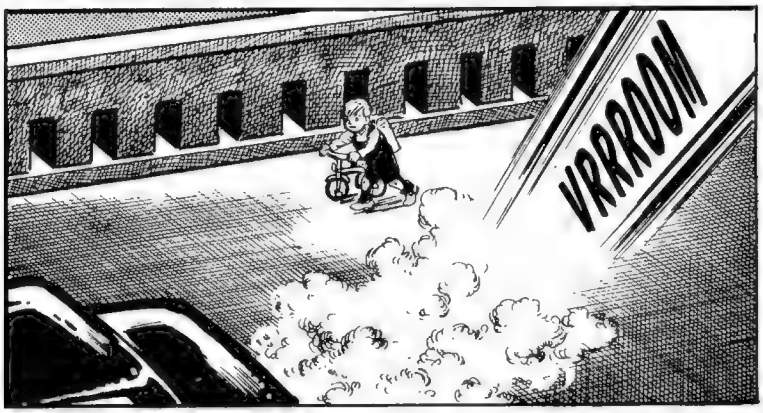
KATUMP

IT'S HIS HAND-WRITING...!
NOTE BOOK

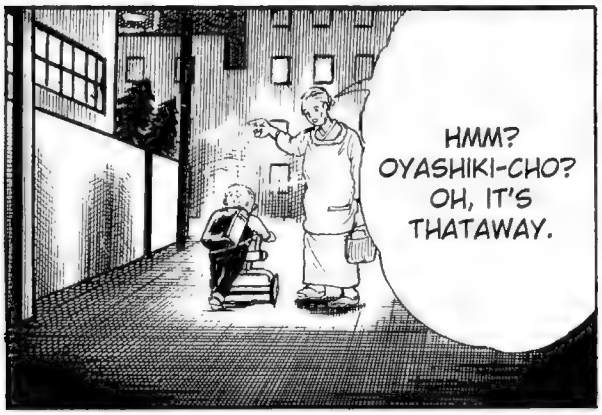

GARA GARA
HUFF...
HUFF...
SCREE
I'M GOING HOME...
HEY KID, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

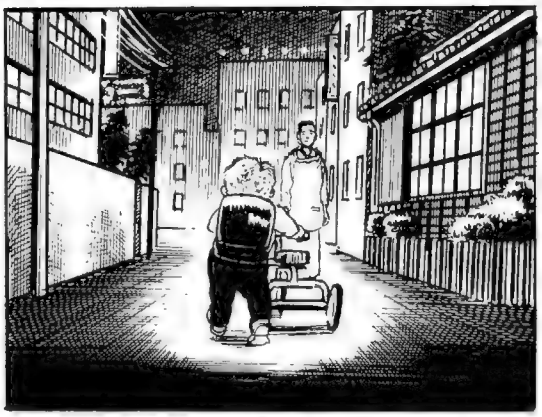
NO, I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN.

DO YOU NEED A LIFT?


VRRROOM

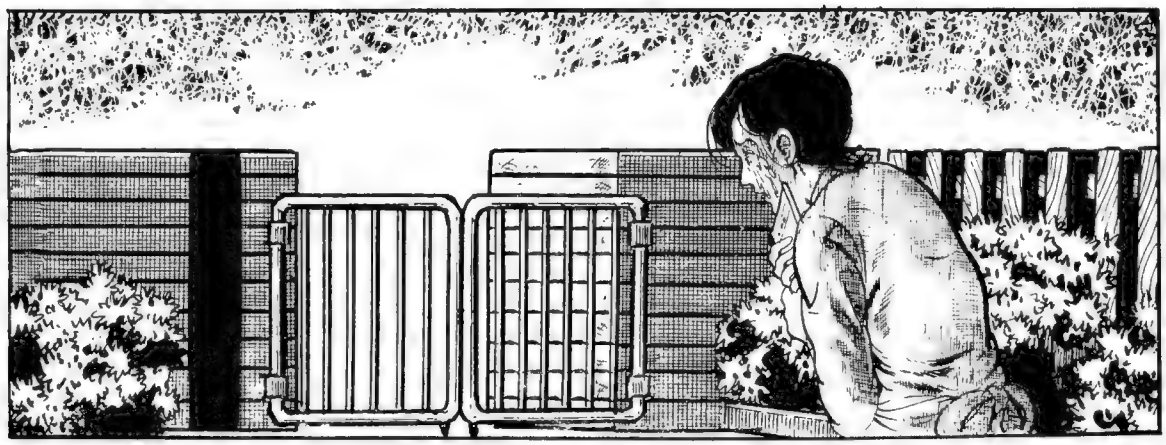
WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN.


HMM? OYASHIKI-CHO? OH, IT'S THATAWAY.

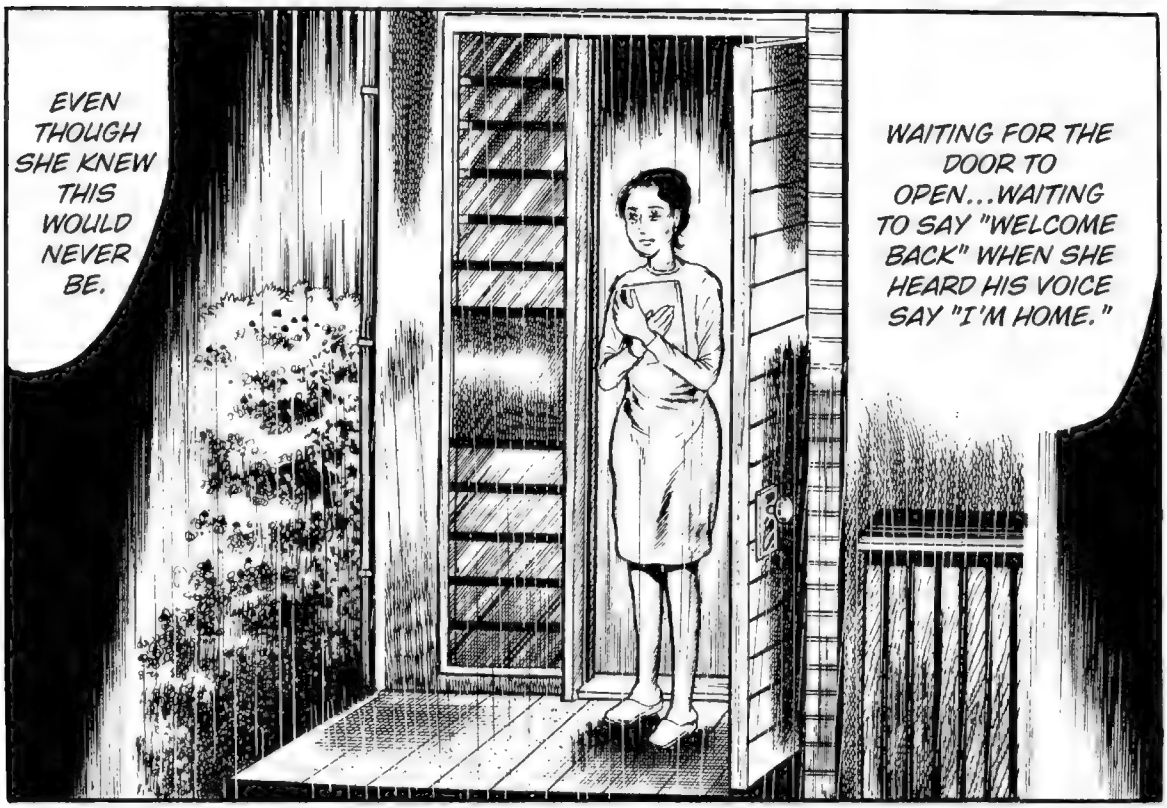


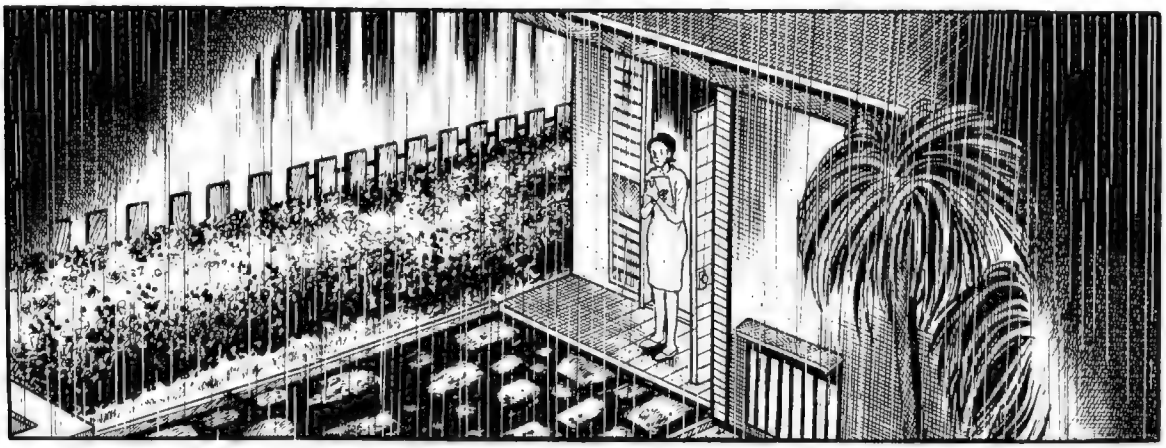
WHAT A STRANGE BOY.

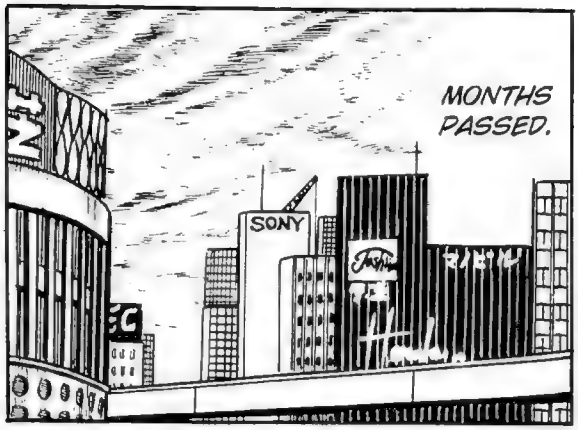
DIARY BOOK



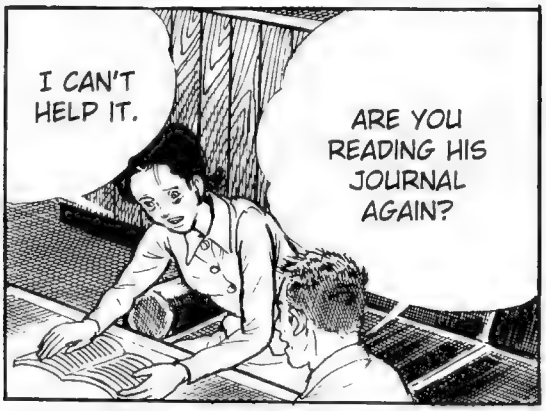
DAY AFTER DAY, THE MOTHER WAITED FOR HER SON'S RETURN.


EVEN THOUGH SHE KNEW THIS WOULD NEVER BE.
WAITING FOR THE DOOR TO OPEN...WAITING TO SAY "WELCOME BACK" WHEN SHE HEARD HIS VOICE SAY "I'M HOME."




MONTHS PASSED.
SONY

I'M AT THE PART WHERE HE'S FIGHTING THE GIANT INSECT.
IT'S RIVETING.


I CAN'T HELP IT.
ARE YOU READING HIS JOURNAL AGAIN?

AT THE VERY END, HE SCRIBBLED, "THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE GIFT FROM THE SKY." I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...

THERE'S ONE PART I DON'T GET, THOUGH.

HE WAS SO IMMATURE WHEN HE WAS WITH US. I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW BRAVE HE COULD BE...

AMERICA?!
WHAT?!

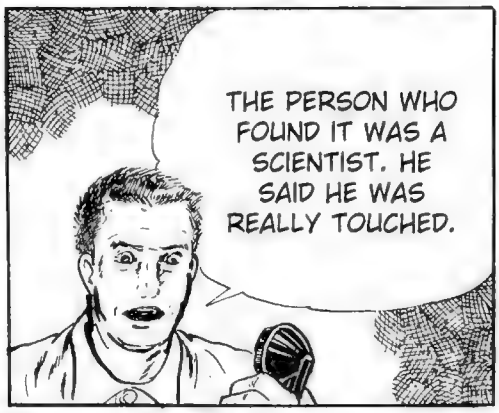
IT'S FROM AMERICA.

IT'S A PHONE CALL FOR YOU, EMIKO.

THE ONE I WROTE TO SHO!
MY LETTER!

YOUR MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE WASHED UP ON THE WEST COAST. APPARENTLY SOMEONE FOUND IT!

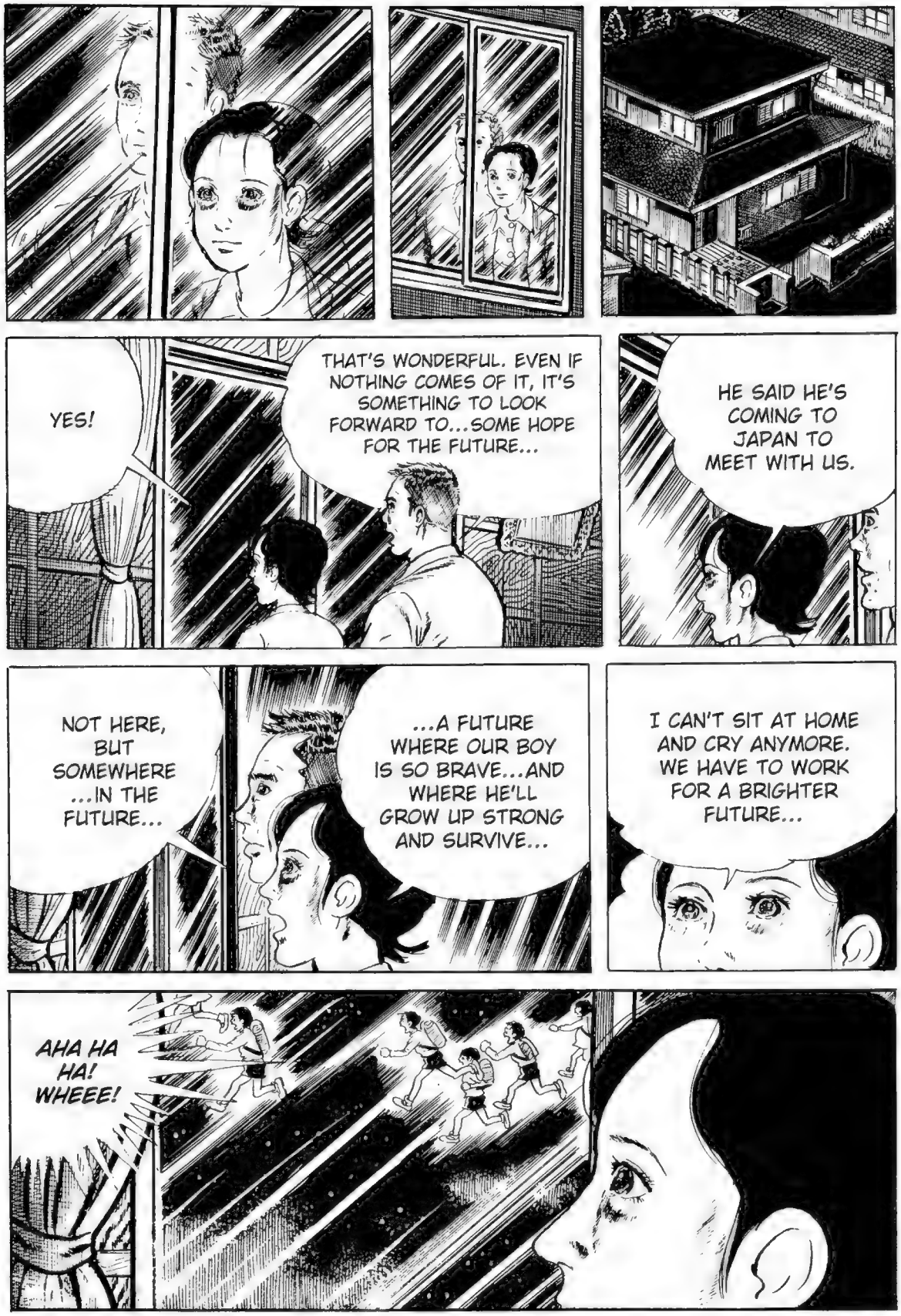
B...BUT WHY DOES HE WANT TO TALK TO ME...?


THE PERSON WHO FOUND IT WAS A SCIENTIST. HE SAID HE WAS REALLY TOUCHED.

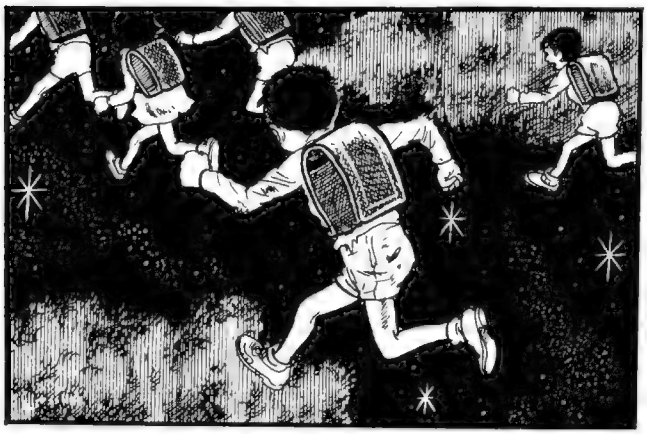
HELLO...THIS IS EMIKO TAKAMATSU...

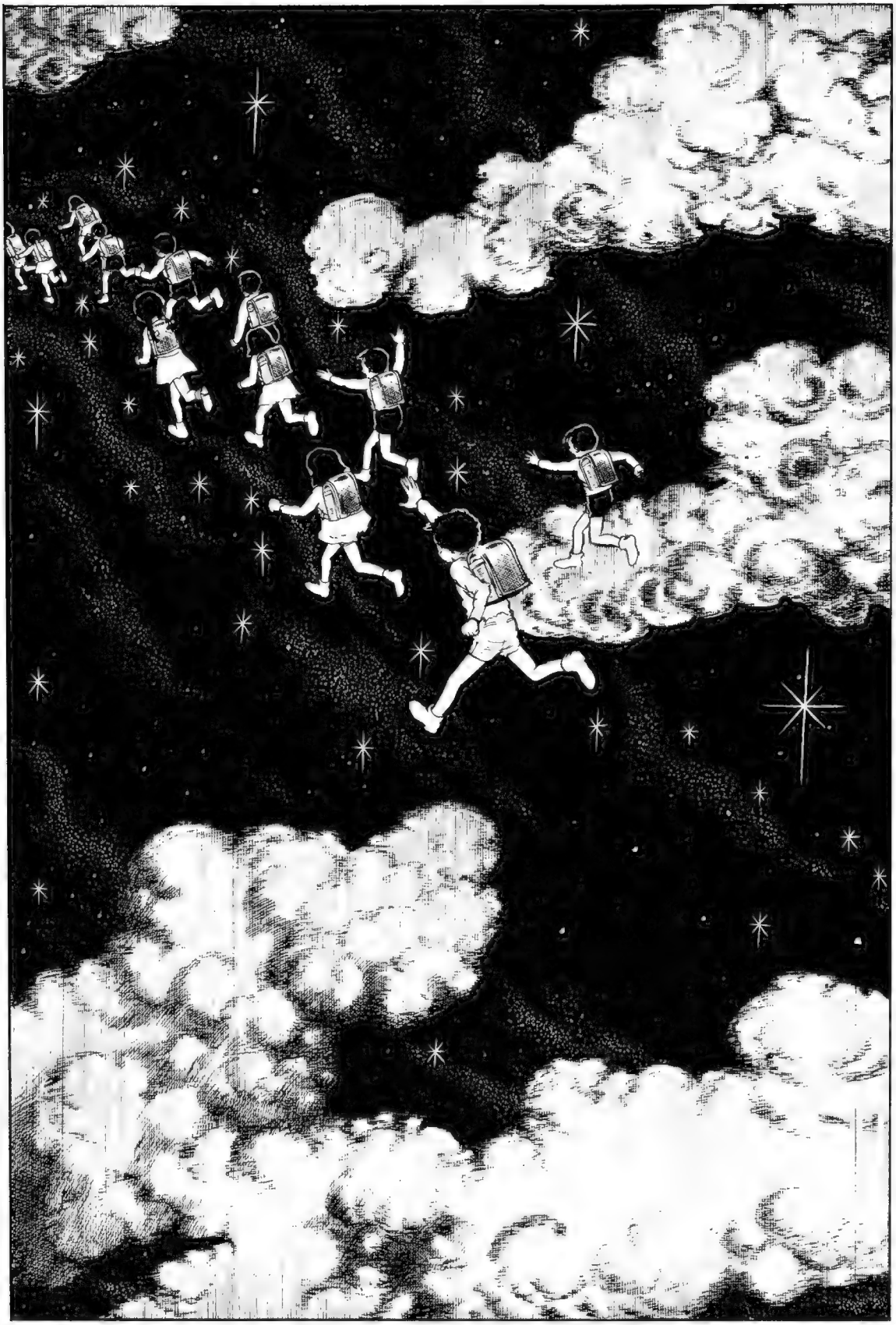
N-NO, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH. WHAT'S THAT? YOU WANT TO MEET WITH ME?

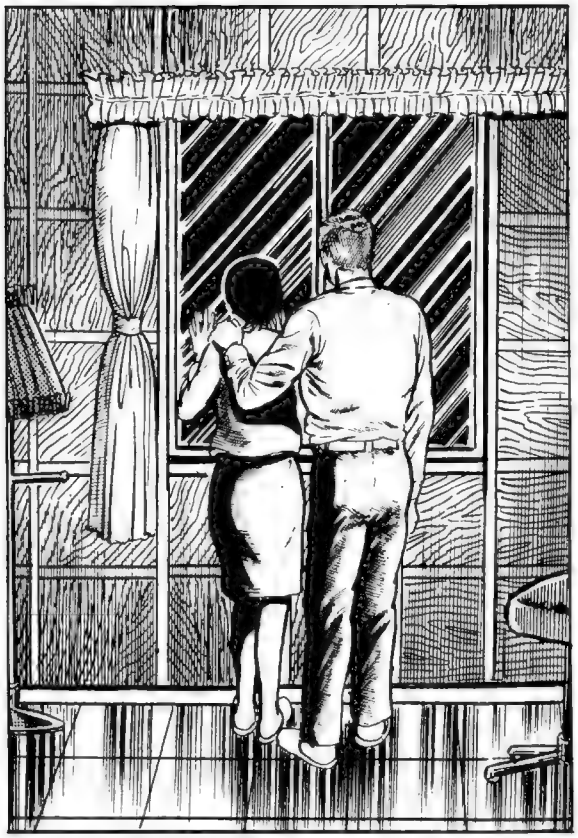
BUT WHY...?
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...

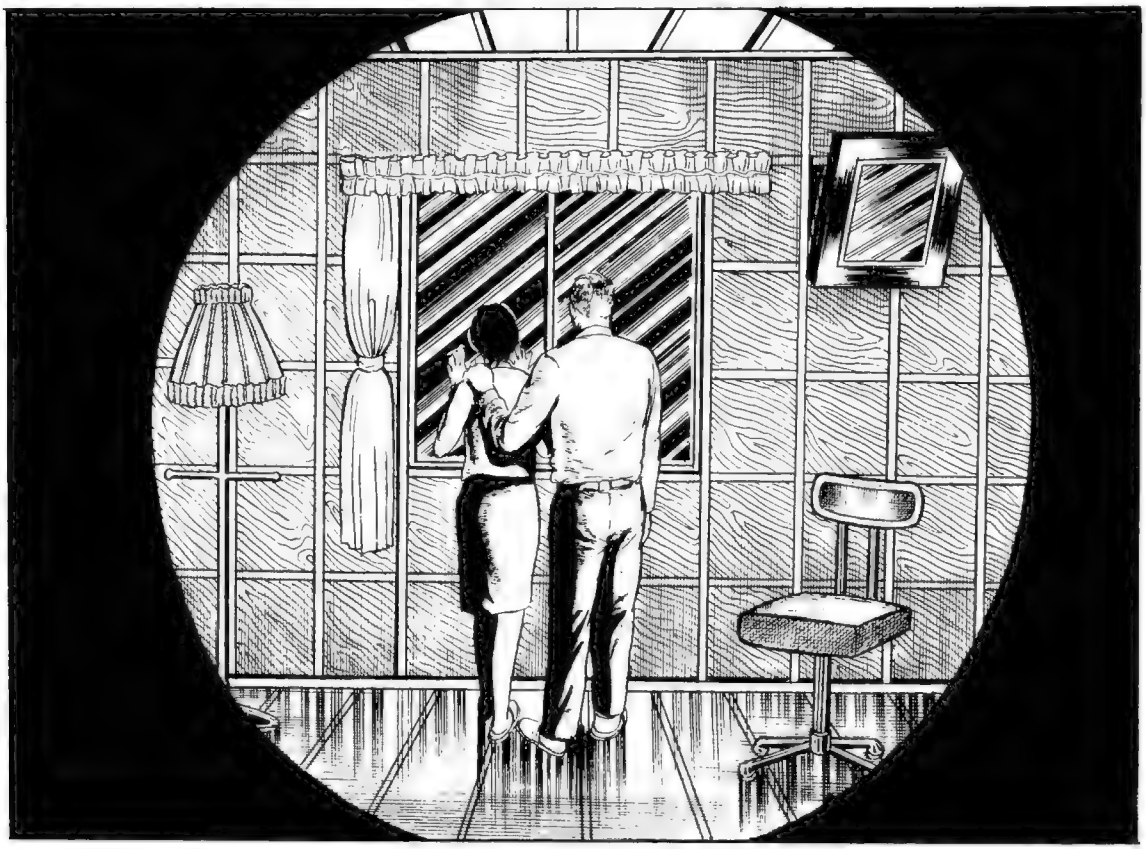

YES!
THAT'S WONDERFUL. EVEN IF NOTHING COMES OF IT, IT'S SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO...SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE...
HE SAID HE'S COMING TO JAPAN TO MEET WITH US.
NOT HERE, BUT SOMEWHERE ...IN THE FUTURE...
...A FUTURE WHERE OUR BOY IS SO BRAVE...AND WHERE HE'LL GROW UP STRONG AND SURVIVE...
I CAN'T SIT AT HOME AND CRY ANYMORE. WE HAVE TO WORK FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE...
AHA HA HA! WHEEE!

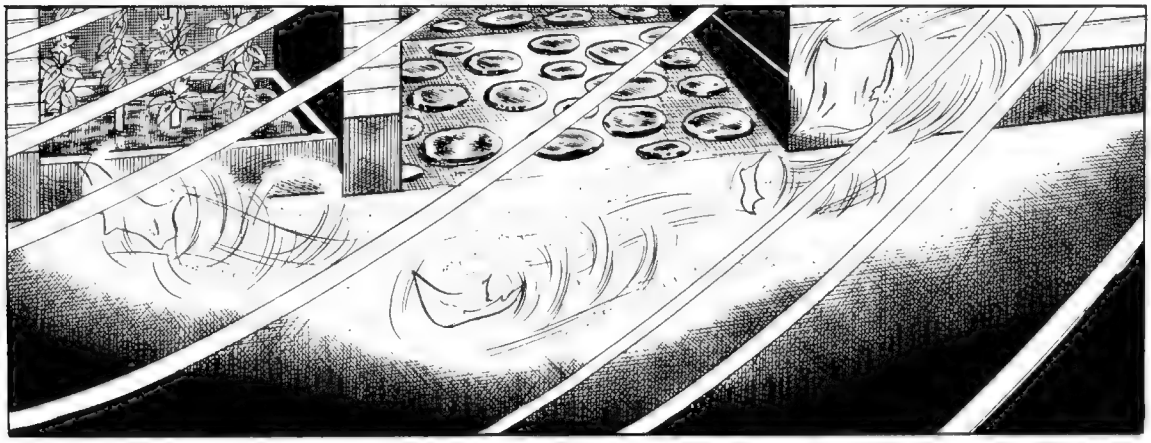
FOR A MOMENT, SHE THOUGHT SHE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SHO AND THE OTHERS RUNNING HAPPILY THROUGH THE STARS...

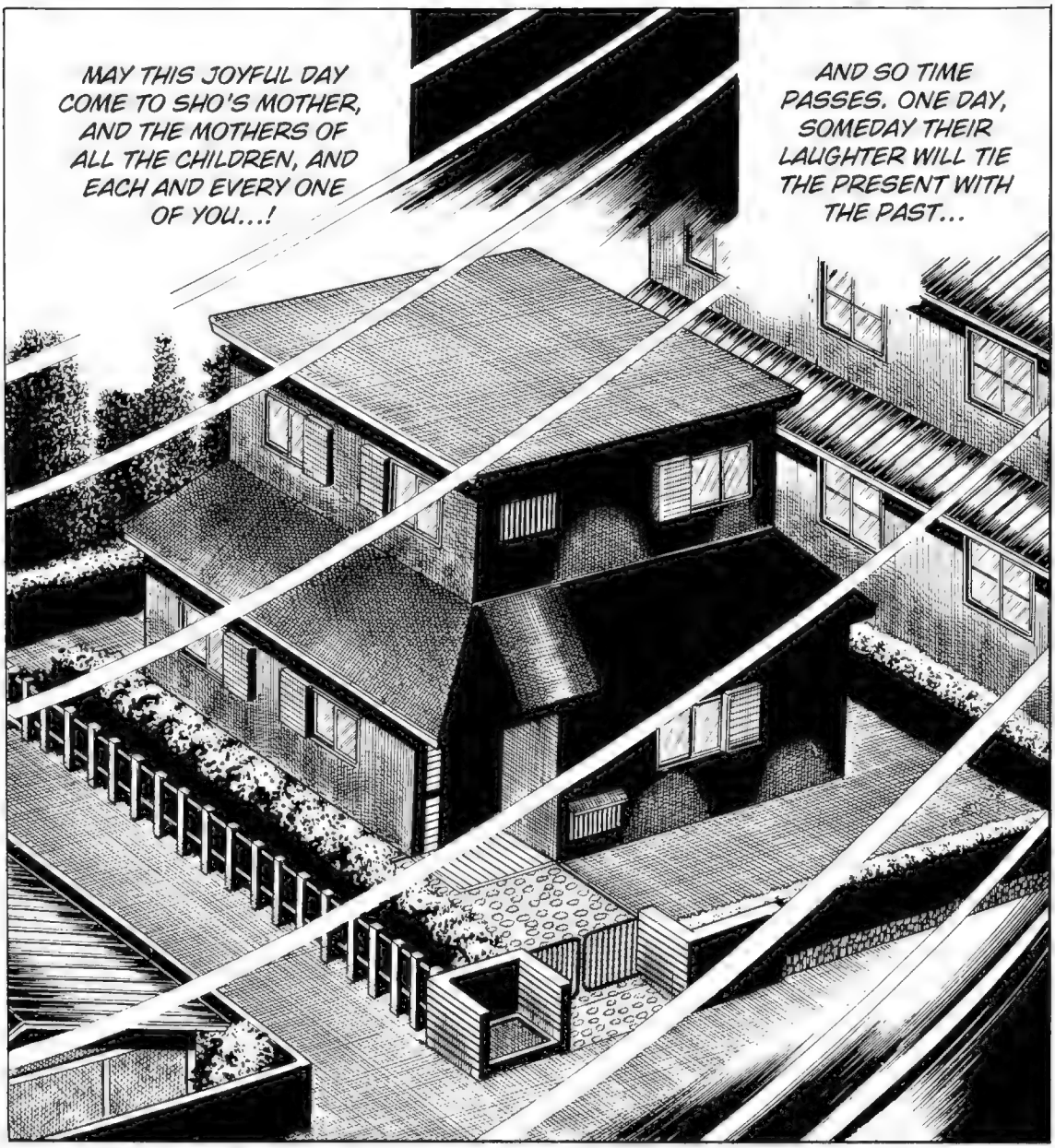








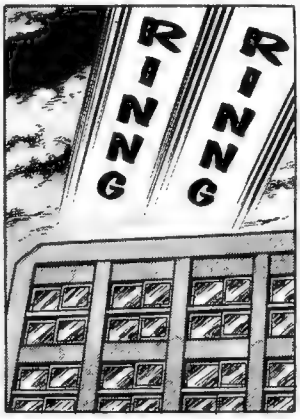


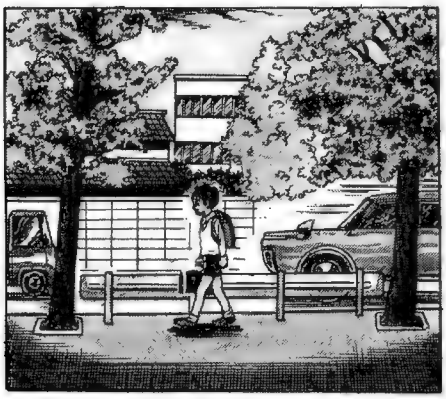

MAY THIS JOYFUL DAY COME TO SHO'S MOTHER, AND THE MOTHERS OF ALL THE CHILDREN, AND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU...!
AND SO TIME PASSES. ONE DAY, SOMEDAY THEIR LAUGHTER WILL TIE THE PRESENT WITH THE PAST...

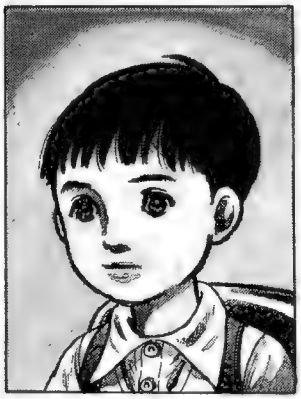
The Drifting Classroom was originally published in *Weekly Shônen Sunday* magazine from 1972 (weekly issue #23) to 1974 (weekly issue #27).

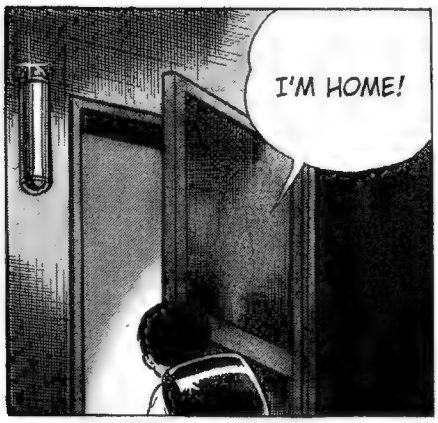
THE WISH

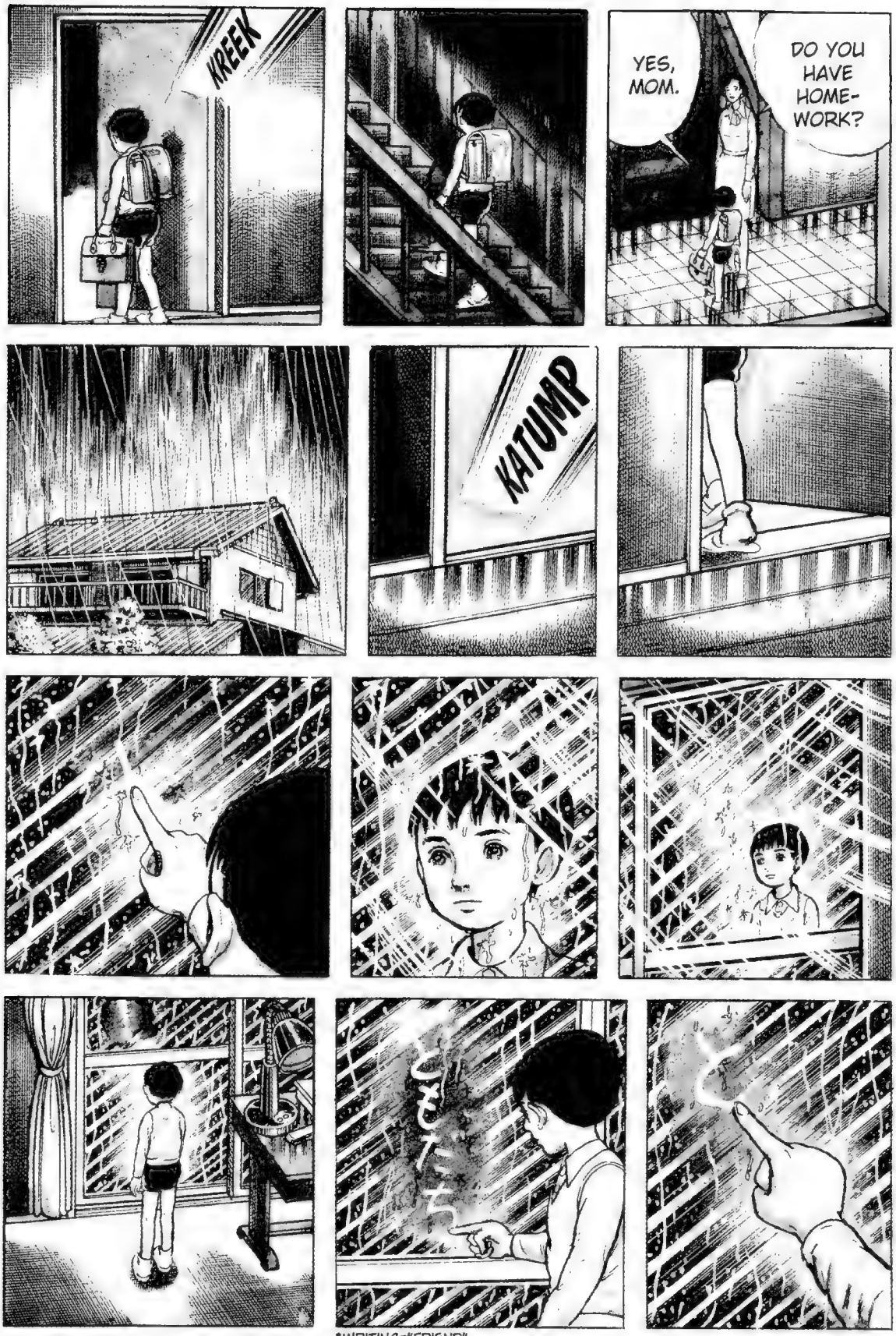
*BOOK=LITERATURE










KREEK
YES, MOM.
DO YOU HAVE HOME-WORK?
KATUMP
*WRITING="FRIEND"

ゴミ捨て場
*SIGN=TRASH
MAYBE IT WAS PART OF THE BANISTER OF A STAIRWAY.
HA HA...IF I GIVE IT A PAIR OF EYES I CAN MAKE A MASK OUT OF IT!
I WONDER WHAT THIS USED TO BE.

WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT WITH YOU?

WELCOME BACK, HITOSHI.

KREEK

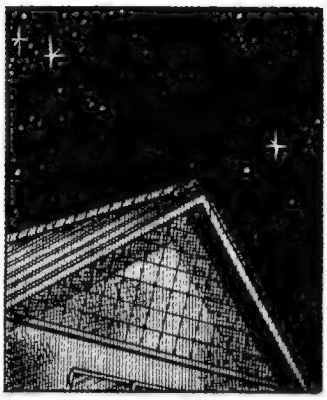
MAYBE LATER...

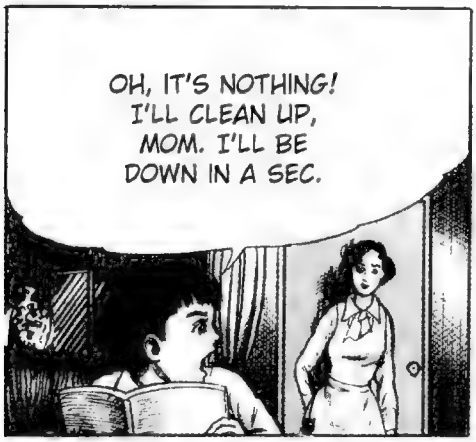
THAT LOOKS FILTHY. I WANT YOU TO GET RID OF IT RIGHT AWAY.

NOTHING. SOME PIECE OF WOOD. I FOUND IT ON THE STREET.

HITOSHI!

HITOSHI... YOUR DINNER'S GETTING COLD.

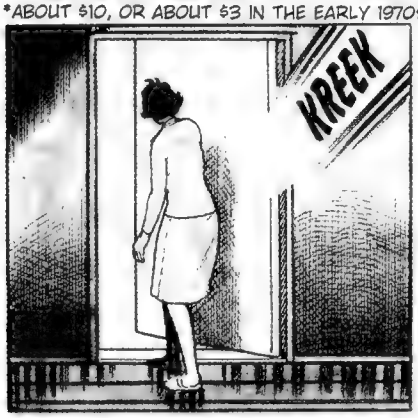


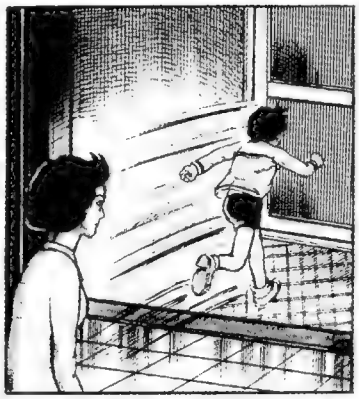

OH, IT'S NOTHING! I'LL CLEAN UP, MOM. I'LL BE DOWN IN A SEC.

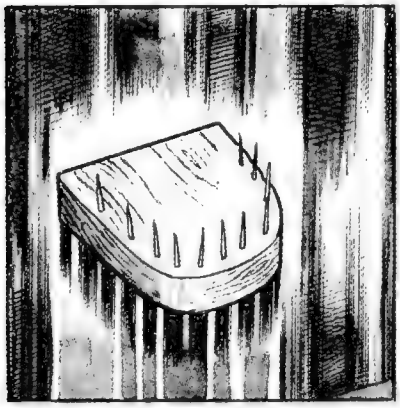
WHAT ARE THESE? WOOD SHAVINGS?

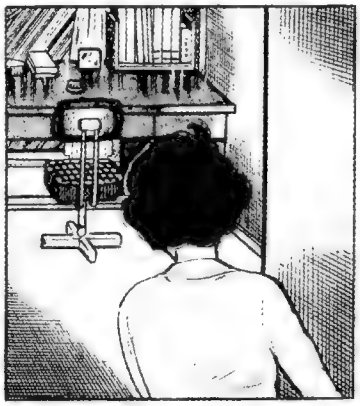
KREEK

*ABOUT $10, OR ABOUT $3 IN THE EARLY 1970S.









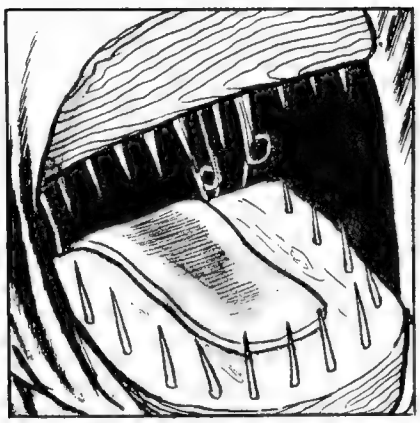
OH!
KREEK
I SHOULD CLEAN UP HITOSHI'S ROOM WHILE HE'S AT SCHOOL.
A FEW DAYS LATER ...
KREEK
KREEK
EYAAA!

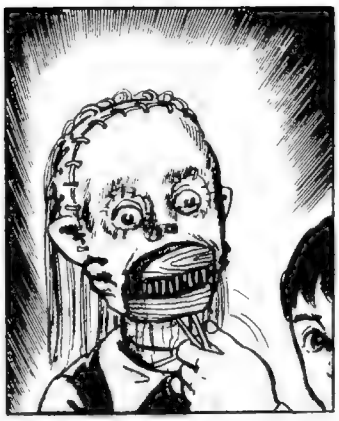
EYAAA!

OHHH

KATUNK

IT MIGHT BE BROKEN THANKS TO YOU!
YOU KNOCKED IT OUT OF MY CHAIR?!
WH-WHAT ?!
BAMM
TM TM TM
THIS IS MY ROBOT! I MADE IT!
NO!
I WANT YOU TO THROW THAT HIDEOUS THING AWAY AT ONCE!
GOOD! IT'S NOT BROKEN!
ATTACHING THE HAIR WAS REALLY HARD!
IT ISN'T CREEPY AT ALL!
WHY DON'T YOU MAKE SOME FRIENDS INSTEAD? THAT THING GIVES ME THE CREEPS!

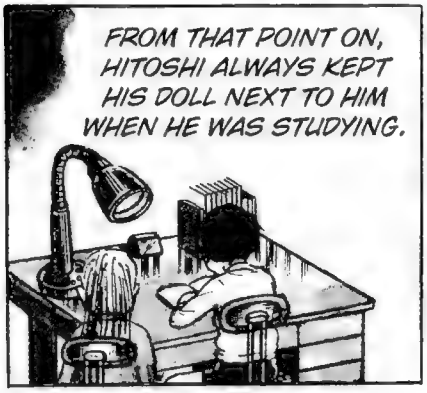




IT CAN EVEN MOVE ITS MOUTH! SEE?

I'M NOT LONELY!
I DON'T NEED ANY FRIENDS.

AGGH!


FROM THAT POINT ON, HITOSHI ALWAYS KEPT HIS DOLL NEXT TO HIM WHEN HE WAS STUDYING.

H-HITOSHI ...!

YOU BETTER NOT THROW THIS AWAY!

I WISH YOU COULD REALLY MOVE...

KENICHI MINORU CHOSUKE ROCKY ROBO

WHAT SHOULD I CALL YOU? I CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD NAME.

WELL, WHEN I WAS LITTLE I WOULD WISH UPON A FALLING STAR.
DAD, HOW CAN I MAKE A WISH COME TRUE?
YOU HAVE TO CHANNEL THE COSMIC ENERGY.
THAT'S WAY OLD.
THAT'LL CHANNEL THE COSMIC ENERGY.
YOU JUST STARE AT SOMETHING EVERY DAY AND FOCUS YOUR PSYCHIC POWER ON IT.
HOW DO I DO *THAT...?*
IF YOU REALLY HAVE PSYCHIC POWER, THEN IT'LL BREAK WHEN YOU STARE AT IT LONG ENOUGH! AND THEN YOUR WISH WILL COME TRUE!
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE EASIEST THING YOU CAN FOCUS ON.
BUT WHAT DO I STARE AT...?

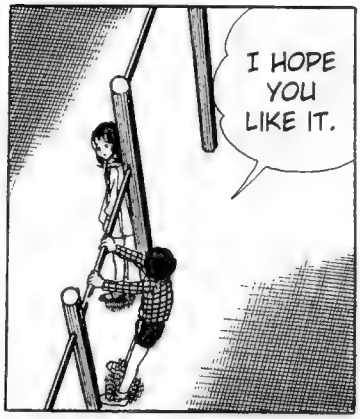
HEY, WAIT UP!
I BET YOU CAN'T DO IT, THOUGH!
BREAK...?
I'LL TRY CHANNELING THE COSMIC ENERGY.
MAYBE IKEGAWA IS RIGHT.
HMM?
KREEK
HITOSHI, I BROUGHT YOU A SNACK.
DON'T INTERRUPT ME. I'M TRYING TO CHANNEL MY PSYCHIC POWER!
HITOSHI! ANSWER ME!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING STARING AT THE LAMP LIKE THAT?

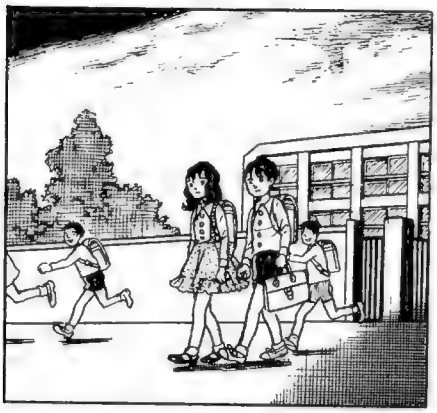
YOU DON'T SAY...!
I'M GOING TO CALL HIM WOODY FROM NOW ON.
NOTHING! I'M JUST WISHING THAT WOODY COULD MOVE LIKE A HUMAN.
NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
*WOODY="MOKUME" IN JAPANESE
IT WON'T BREAK AT ALL...
EVERY DAY HITOSHI FOCUSED ON THE LAMP.
THIS LAMP'S MADE OF METAL. IT'S SO SOLID...!
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN SOMETHING ELSE.
MAYBE MY PSYCHIC POWER IS TOO WEAK.
NO NEED TO WORRY. HE'S JUST A KID...HE'LL GET OVER IT.
HE SAYS HE'S TRYING TO CHANNEL "COSMIC ENERGY" TO BRING HIS DOLL TO LIFE.
DEAR, HITOSHI HASN'T DONE A THING ALL WEEK BUT STARE AT HIS LAMP.

A NEW STUDENT.
WE HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS TODAY.
HELLO. MY NAME IS TOMOKO URANO...
...TO TOMOKO URANO.
LET'S GIVE A WARM WELCOME ...
HA HA HA
WHEE
WHEE
WHEE
WHEE
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR SCHOOL...?
H... HELLO...

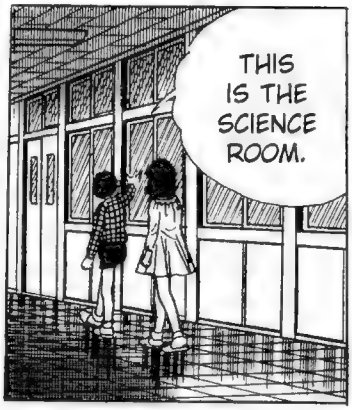
IT'S NOT SO BIG. I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND.

IT'S REALLY BIG.


I HOPE YOU LIKE IT.



RINNG
RINNG
AND SO, TOMOKO AND HITOSHI BECAME FRIENDS.


THIS IS THE SCIENCE ROOM.

FOR REAL?!

HEY, DO YOU WANT TO COME OVER ON SUNDAY AND STUDY WITH ME?

NOT REALLY.
YOU'RE SO SMART, HITOSHI.

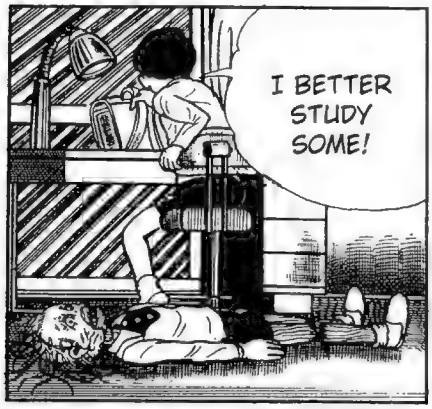
LA LA LA!

OKAY!
I'LL SEE YOU LATER THEN!

I'D LOVE TO.
SURE. WE CAN HANG OUT AND PLAY GAMES, TOO.

YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY.
WELCOME BACK, HITOSHI.

I'M HOOME!


I BETTER STUDY SOME!

CHAKK

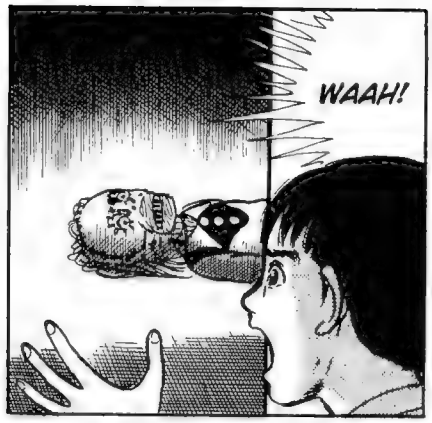
BANG

MAN! WHAT A PAIN...

MAY I BE EXCUSED?
DON'T BE STUPID!

SO YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND NOW?

MY!
I INVITED MY FRIEND TOMOKO OVER.


WAAH!

KLAK

HUH?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, HITOSHI?

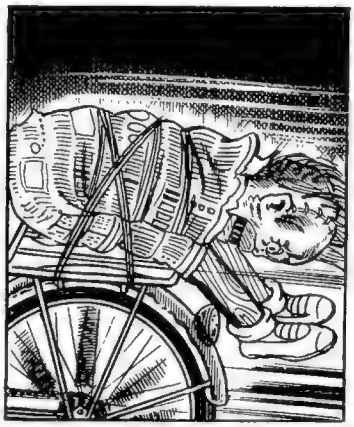
COME TO THINK OF IT, HE LOOKS LIKE SOME CREEPY MONSTER!

THAT WAS SCARY. IT WAS JUST WOODY.

IT WON'T TAKE LONG!

I'M GETTING RID OF THIS!
OH!

SCREE
I EVEN FOUND A GOOD PLACE TO THROW IT AWAY...



THUDD
THEY'RE MAKING A BUILDING HERE, SO IT'LL BE BURIED IN CONCRETE. NO ONE WILL EVER FIND IT.
GOODBYE, WOODY!
YOU'RE WELCOME HERE ANYTIME.
THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME. I HAD SUCH A WONDERFUL TIME!
WITH HIS FUTURE LOOKING SO BRIGHT AND NEW, THE CHILD WANTED TO GET RID OF OLD THINGS.
OH YEAH...I WONDER IF THEY STARTED CONSTRUCTION ON THAT BUILDING. I GUESS I SHOULD GO SEE.

THEY STARTED!

KLANG
KLANG

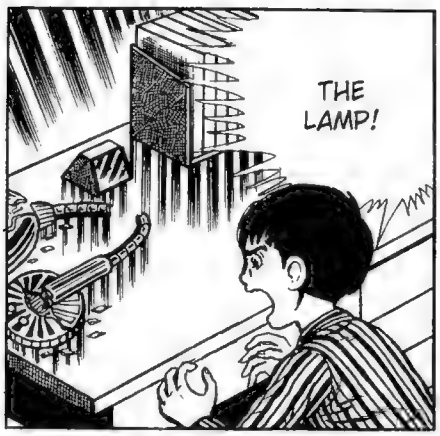
IT CAME FROM MY STUDY ROOM!
WH-WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?!

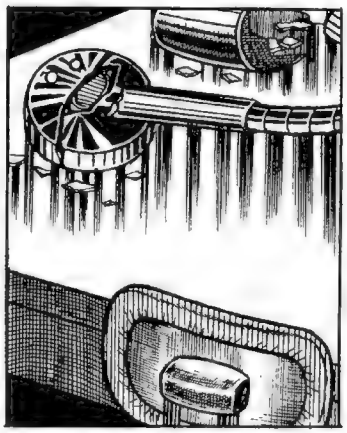
KRASSH

LATER THAT NIGHT ...

KLIK

KREEK


THE LAMP!



AH!

IT'S IN PIECES ...
IT MUST HAVE BROKE BY ITSELF...

I-IT'S BROKEN!

HAS MY WISH BEEN GRANTED...? THAT CAN'T BE...!

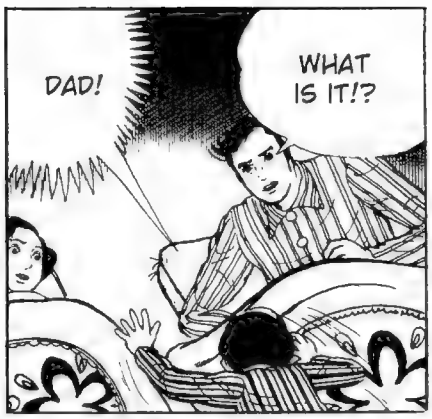
SLAM

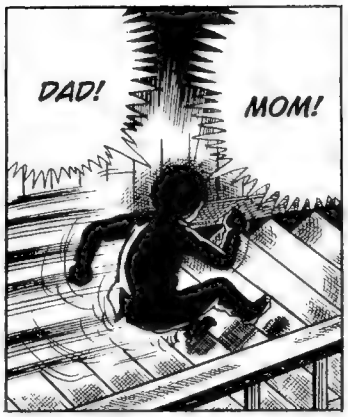
UWAAH!

THERE'S NO WAY...!

N-NO...!

WH-WHO IS IT?
BANG
BANG BANG
AH!
KREEK
I SAID, WHO IS IT?!
KREE
AIEEE!
AAGGH !
GACHA
GACHA
SLAMM
BAM


DAD!
WHAT IS IT!?

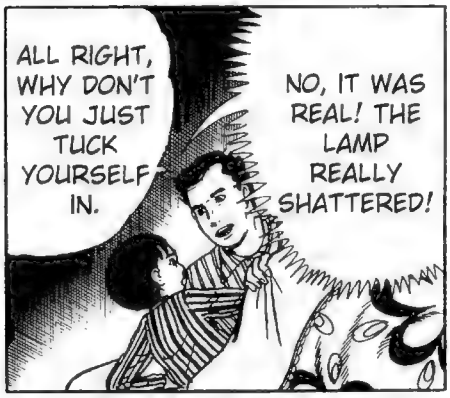

DAD!
MOM!

MOM!

WHAT?! WOODY ?!
IT'S WOODY! HE'S BACK!

SOB... SOB...

WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
I'M SCARED!


ALL RIGHT, WHY DON'T YOU JUST TUCK YOURSELF IN.
NO, IT WAS REAL! THE LAMP REALLY SHATTERED!

HITOSHI, YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHT-MARE.

CAN I SLEEP HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT?
HE'S GOING TO KILL ME! I CAN'T SLEEP BY MYSELF.

DAD AND MOM WILL ALWAYS BE NEAR YOU.
DON'T WORRY. I'LL HOLD YOU CLOSE. YOU SLEEP TIGHT.

I'M SO SCARED !

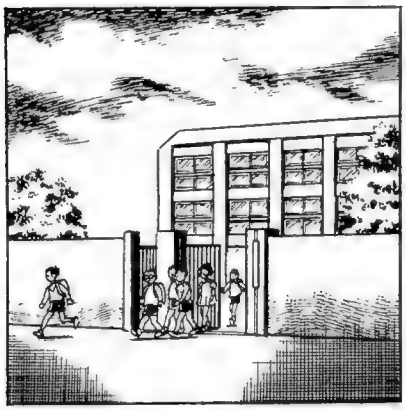
I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN IT APART BEFORE I THREW IT AWAY! HOW DID IT GET OUT OF THAT CONSTRUCTION SITE?

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY.

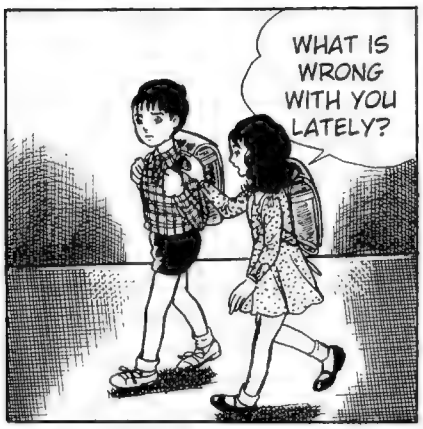
HITOSHI.

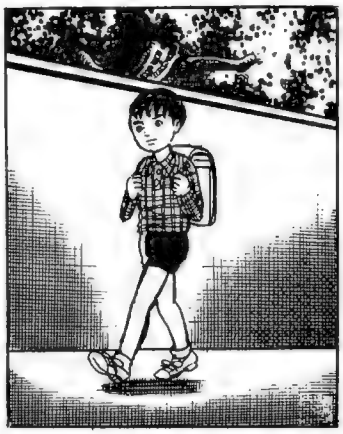
HUH?!

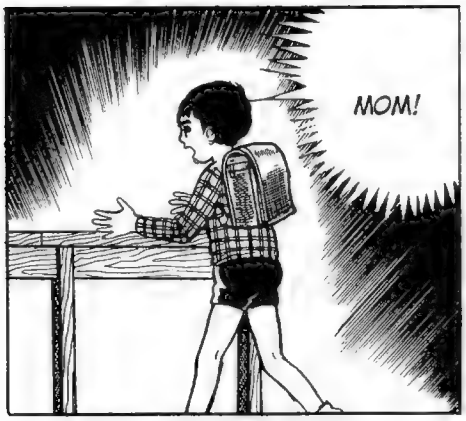
WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER SOMETIME?

I-IT'S NOTHING.


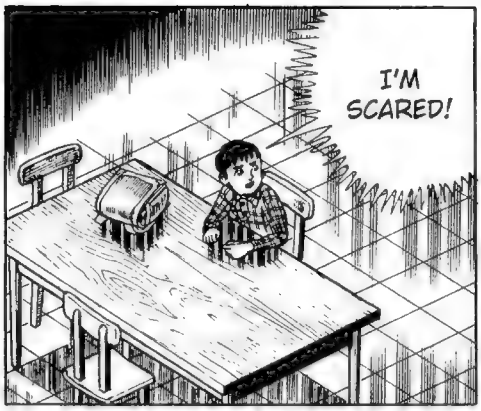
UNNH...
WHY NOT?

OH...NO THANKS ...

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU LATELY?

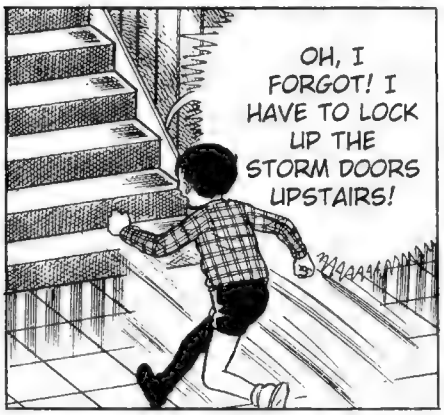
WHY WON'T YOU WAIT FOR ME?




*LETTER=TO HITOSHI, FROM MOM


I'M SCARED!

SPSSH
SPSSH

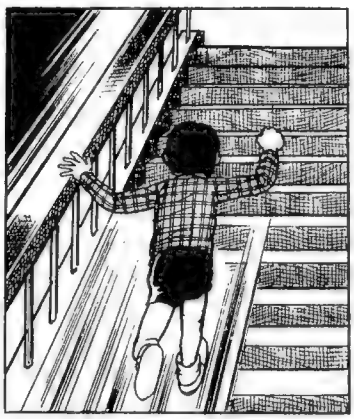

OH, I FORGOT! I HAVE TO LOCK UP THE STORM DOORS UPSTAIRS!

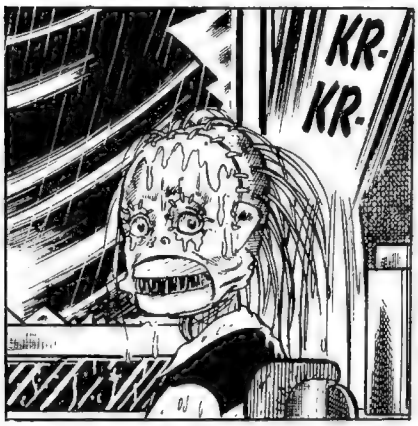
CHAK
CHAK

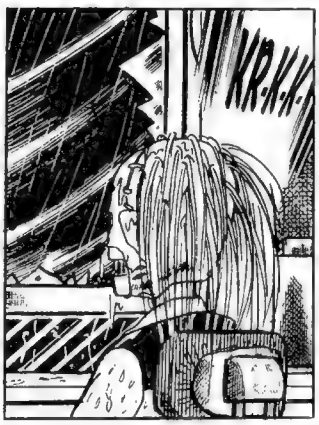
WOODY'S GOING TO TRY AND KILL ME...!

GASP!

KREE




KR-
KR-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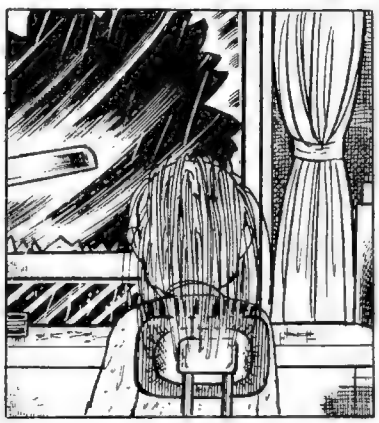
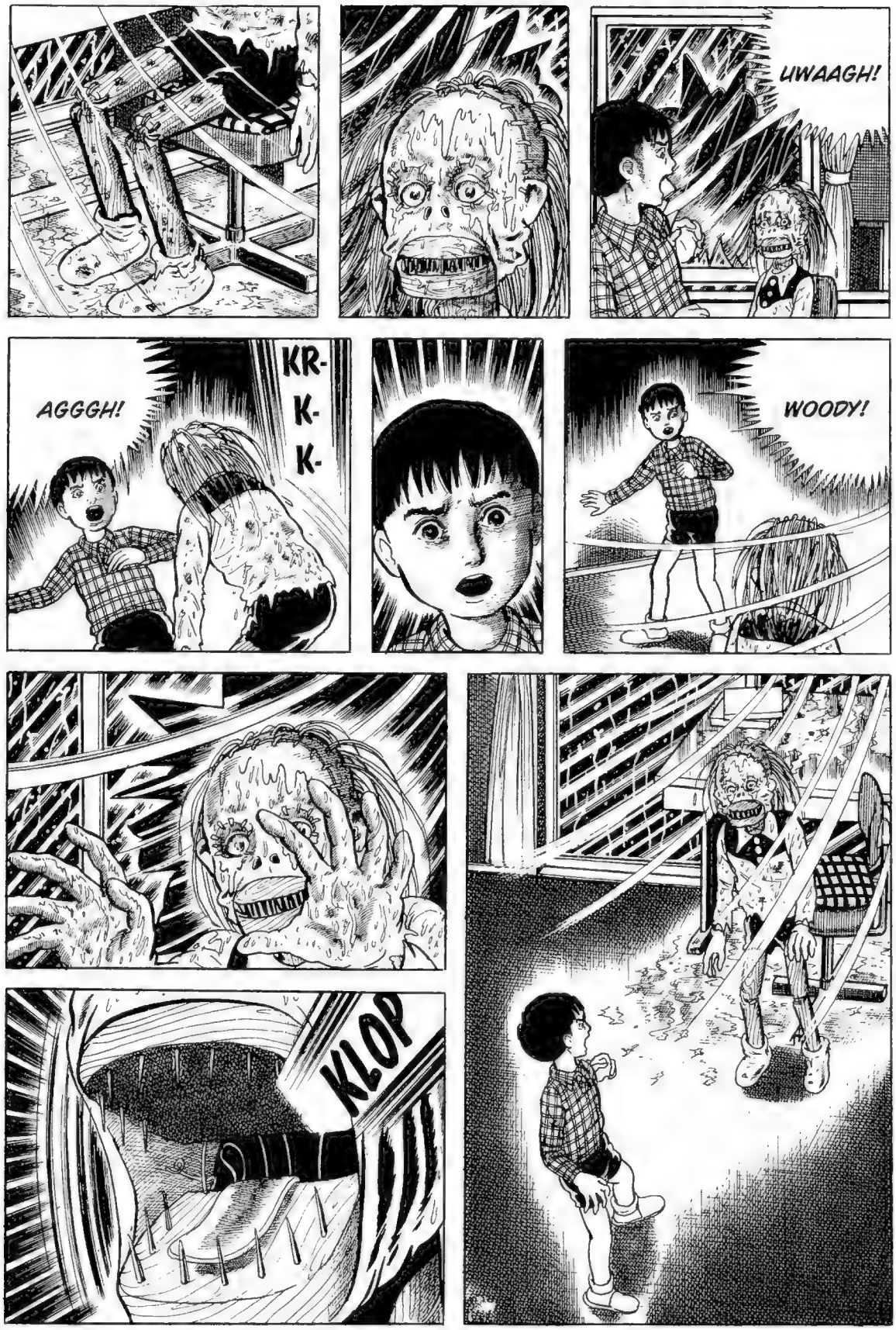
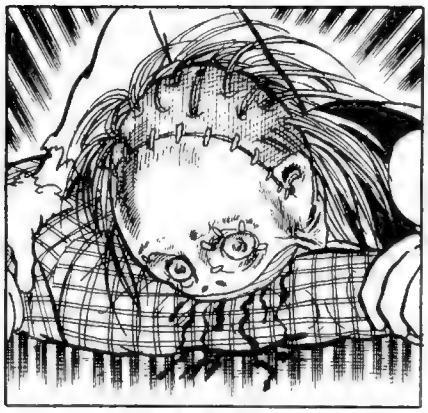
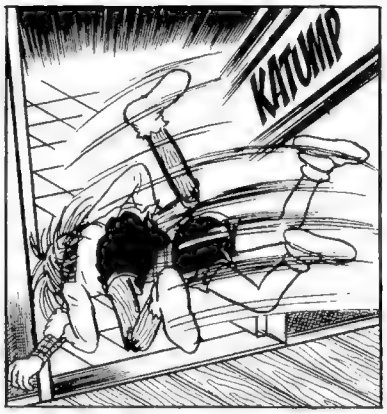
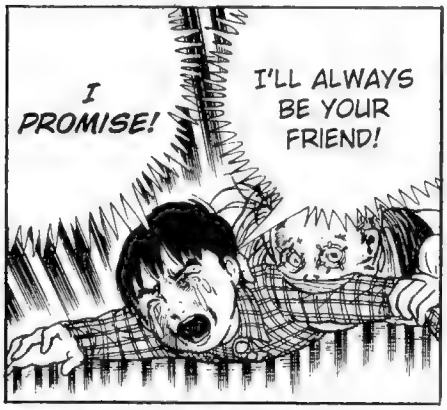



UWAAGH!
AGGGH!
KR-
K-
K-
WOODY!
KLOP

AIEE!
RRIP
GYAAA!
CHOMP
UNGYAAH!

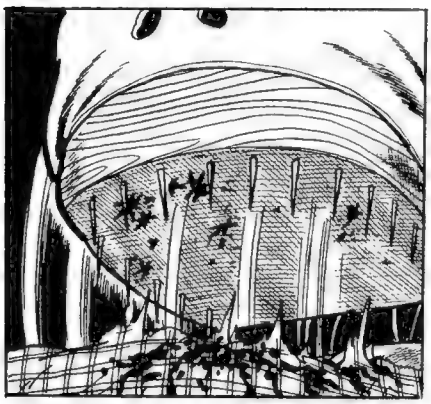



KATUMP

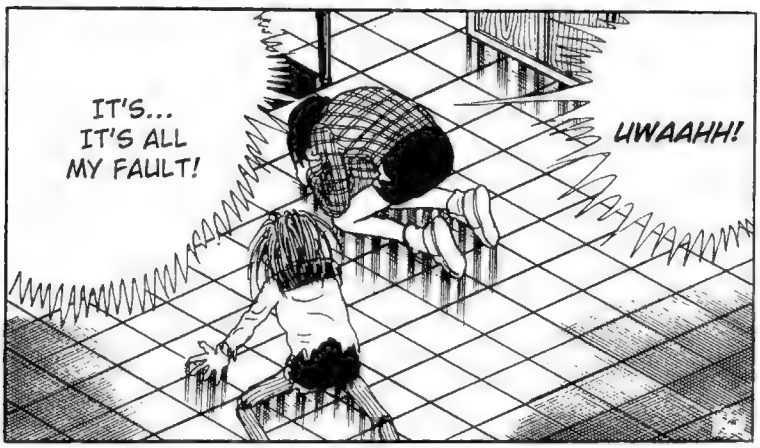

I PROMISE!
I'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR FRIEND!

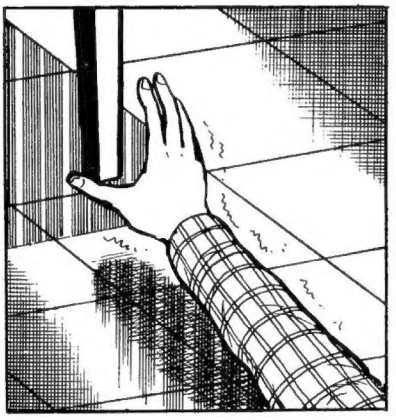
I DIDN'T MEAN TO THROW YOU AWAY!

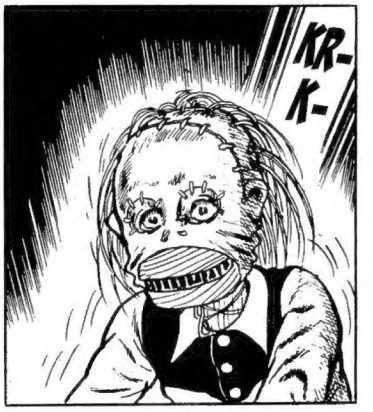
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME!



PLEASE!


IT'S... IT'S ALL MY FAULT!
UWAAHH!

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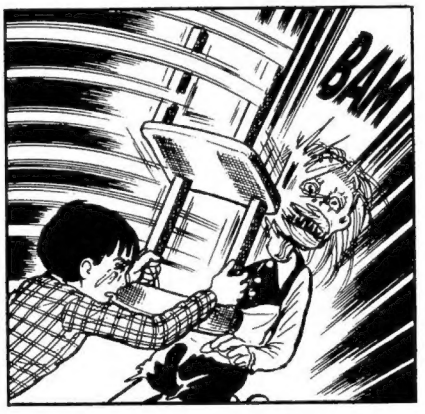
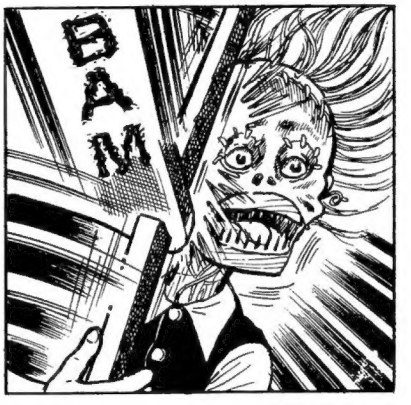

BAM

I'M SO SORRY, WOODY!

KRAKK


BAM

I CAN'T MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOU AROUND!
BUT I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH YOU ANYMORE!
BAM

I REALLY DID LIKE YOU!

I DIDN'T MEAN TO BETRAY YOU!
BAM

I CAST A WISH ON YOU!
I MADE YOU!
WHUD
I CAST A WISH ON YOU!
KRAKK
THE EXTRAORDINARY WISH FROM HIS CHILDHOOD WOULD NEVER AGAIN CAUSE ANOTHER MIRACLE.
OH, MOM! MOM!
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!
NO, MOM!
SO, YOU LIED ABOUT GETTING RID OF WOODY.
WHAT ON EARTH --?
HIS PARENTS CAME BACK LATE THAT NIGHT.

The Nightmarish Imagination

An Essay by Saburo Kawamoto

Childhood is full of fears. The darkness of night, the rustle of trees, strangers... and most of all, death. Children are made of fear.

But as we grow up our fear dissipates; we adjust to daily life and lose our primal fears. We may feel uneasy when we are alone in our house at night, in the dark, but for the most part, we no longer feel the same intense fear; that fear that we can hardly bring ourselves to remember. We lose that sense of overwhelming terror, and gradually, we become ordinary adults.

But Kazuo Umezu never lost his fears. He's still afraid of the night. He's afraid of the dark. As his fear grows, his imagination spawns new fears, and he ends up a captive of his own nightmare.

Umezu's work is terrifying. But that's not because he's trying to scare his readers; it's because he knows those fears himself. To adults an ordinary daylight scene might mean nothing…but to children, it has the power to explode into a terrible nightmare. A familiar street can suddenly turn into an alien place.

Umezu knows this kind of special fear. It was this infant fear that gave birth to one of the classics of manga, *The Drifting Classroom*.

"What if the world were to suddenly vanish one day? What if you were teleported to another dimension?" A grown-up would automatically file this premise away in the genre of science fiction, with all the condescension that it implies, but Umezu confronts it with dead seriousness and unblinking terror. The shrunken, confined world of school is suddenly connected to the awe-inspiring notion of the end of the world. The mundane explodes into the cosmic. With their power of imagination, children can make this leap, but the average adult is too enmeshed in everyday life.

One day, in the middle of a big city, an elementary school and its students suddenly vanish. On a fairy-tale level, the premise is reminiscent of the Grimm brothers' "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Children are hardly part of the "real" world to begin with; most of their time is spent outside our vision, in mind-worlds adults cannot imagine. And (as our culture always warns us) adults must be careful with their children, sometimes careful to the point of paranoia, or our children may literally vanish, "spirited away."

From the children's perspective, the elementary school has been transported to a barren wasteland. The children eventually realize that they are still on planet Earth, but in the future. In Jules Verne's novel *Adrift in the Pacific*, the children drift to a remote island, but in *The Drifting Classroom* the children end up marooned in a future world. It turns out that the planet has been ruined by a horrible, unspecified disaster—a nuclear war or environmental devastation. By being sent to the future, the kids have survived the disaster, making their school a sort of Noah's ark.

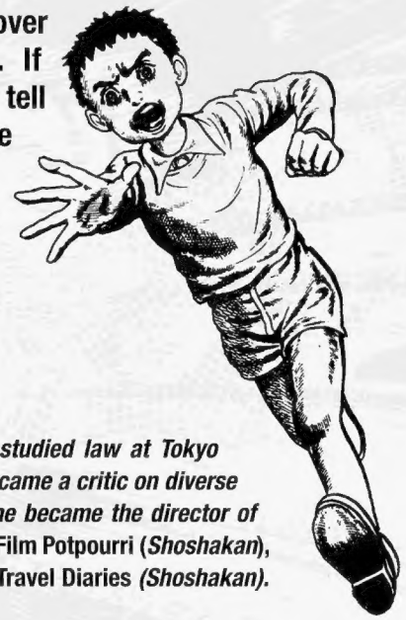
But whereas God protected Noah's ark, there is no divine intervention for the children in Umezu's story. If anything, their barren, future Earth has been forsaken by God. There is no water, almost no sign of life, and black clouds block the sun. The once-green planet has turned into a black ball of mud. In the sheer thoroughness of the world's destruction, its crushing finality, you can sense that Umezu must dread this possible future, the way the children themselves would. This is where his nightmarish imagination shines.

In this horrific environment, the children struggle to survive. They face one danger after another—a psychotic murderer, a flood, poisonous plants, giant insects and reptiles—all these are part of the vision of Kazuo Umezu. The children scream in horror, but rather than bringing relief, their screams only heighten their fears. Could the monstrous insect actually be a product of their fear-ridden imaginations? Umezu came up with his grotesque monsters and desert landscapes before *Alien* or the movie version of *Dune*. The scene where the students are attacked by robot dinosaurs anticipates *Jurassic Park*. Given that *The Drifting Classroom* was written in the 1970s, Umezu's originality is amazing.

The children's perils come not only from the outside. In desperation, they split into groups and end up killing each other. This part is reminiscent of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, as the children fight one another and die one by one.

It is moving to see Sho, Saki, and their friends struggle against these horrors—without relying on adults, without relying on God. Furthermore, Umezu doesn't resort to a sentimental ending where the children return home safely. They remain in the future, living—somehow—in their new world.

Although *The Drifting Classroom* was written over 30 years ago, the story has hardly aged. If anything, it's more relevant than ever. We tell ourselves that our modern world is more harrowing than ever, but for children in all ages, the fear is always there.



Saburo Kawamoto *was born July 15, 1944, in Tokyo. He studied law at Tokyo University. After working as a reporter for Asahi News, he became a critic on diverse topics including literature, film, and urban theory. In 1959 he became the director of "Sound Break" on TV Tokyo. His recent books include* Showa Film Potpourri (*Shoshakan*), *and* Kafu and Tokyo. *His translations include* Jack London's Travel Diaries *(Shoshakan).*